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ONE FOR THE STARS

Bopanna the oldest man to win a Slam title

The 43-year-old Indian clinches the Australian Open doubles crown in the company of Ebden

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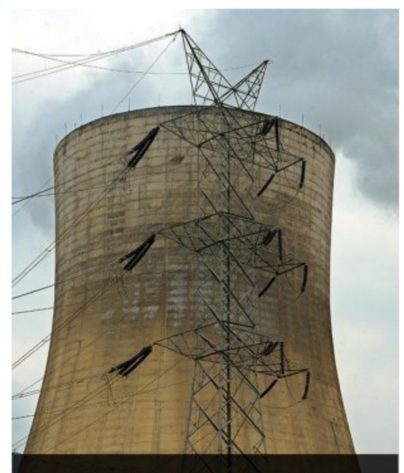

'Minimal radioactive discharges from Indian nuclear plants'

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NEARBY

Hoteliers request patrons not to overstay

BENGALURU
A popular saying in hospitality is, "Do not overstay your welcome". Hoteliers in Bengaluru have the same request for their customers now. The BBHA is planning to put up boards in their restaurants asking people to vacate the space after having their meal. » Page 2

BJP plans a series of events ahead of LS elections

BENGALURU
The BJP on Saturday chalked out a series of programmes, including a women's convention at the district level, a wall painting campaign with the slogan "BJP for the third time, Modi once again" in each hobli, and beneficiary meetings. » Page 5

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BJP weighs its options in Bihar; MLAs' meet today

Party's legislators meet twice on Saturday; Nitish Kumar likely to resign today; Amit Shah is expected in Patna; two Deputy Chief Ministers from BJP may take oath along with the CM

Amarnath Tewary
PATNA

Amid growing buzz that Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar may resign from his post on Sunday to join hands again with the BJP to form the NDA government in the State, BJP leaders and MLAs met twice on Saturday.

They ended the day's deliberations on a parting note that they would meet again on Sunday morning to discuss "certain things" with the anticipated ruling partner, Janata Dal (United).

While party leaders coming out of the BJP State headquarters in Patna were reluctant to speak on the details of the meeting, BJP insiders told *The Hindu* that an agreement had been reached for two Deputy Chief Ministers from the BJP to take oath along with Mr. Kumar.

Renu Devi was finalised as one Deputy CM candidate, while the party was yet to decide between Sushil Kumar Modi and Tarkishore Prasad for the second post, said a senior party leader preferring anonymity.

All three leaders have held the post in earlier NDA governments.

Mr. Modi, a senior leader and Rajya Sabha member, is considered close to Mr. Kumar.

"We also need certain guarantees from Mr. Kumar on some issues," added the leader.

"We are meeting again tomorrow [Sunday] morning at 9 a.m.," the party MP for Saran, Rajiv Pratap Rudy, said.

Nitish Kumar, in the presence of Union Minister Ashwini Choubey, offers prayers at the Brahmeshwarnath Temple in Buxar. ANI

'Direct talks'

Union Home Minister Amit Shah and BJP president J.P. Nadda are likely to visit Patna on Sunday to discuss "certain things" with Mr. Kumar directly.

"The party this time wants to move very very cautiously with Nitish, in view of his previous track record of sudden turnarounds," a State party leader who was present at the meeting on Saturday told *The Hindu*, requesting anonymity.

The BJP has also demanded the post of Speaker from Mr. Kumar. Senior party leader Vijay Kumar Sinha was the Speaker in the previous NDA government.

CONTINUED ON » PAGE 7

Lalu Prasad to take final call on grand alliance

PATNA
RJD legislators on Saturday authorised party chief Lalu Prasad to take a final call on the future of *Mahagathbandhan*. Party sources said Mr. Prasad had asked the MLAs not to lose hope as the "game is not over yet". » PAGE 8

SP-Congress alliance 'off to good start' in U.P.: Akhilesh

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Offering 11 out of the 80 Lok Sabha seats in Uttar Pradesh to the Congress, Samajwadi Party (SP) president and former U.P. Chief Minister Akhilesh Yadav on Saturday said that their "alliance" was off to a good start in the State.

The Congress was quick to endorse the positive development but insisted that the seat-sharing had not reached its conclusion yet. The party asserted that senior leader Ashok Gehlot will soon meet Mr. Yadav for further discussions.

Both the Congress and the SP are members of the Indian National Developmental, Inclusive Alliance (INDIA). The development came amid strong indications that Bihar Chief Minister and Janata Dal (United) president Nitish Kumar is likely to leave the Opposition bloc and rejoin the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA).

CONTINUED ON » PAGE 7

India, France agree on surveillance ties

Emmanuel Macron and Narendra Modi during the At-Home reception hosted by Droupadi Murmu at Rashtrapati Bhavan. ANI

Dinakar Peri
NEW DELHI

India and France have agreed to intensify their cooperation in the southwest Indian Ocean, building on the "joint surveillance missions" carried out from French La Reunion in 2020 and 2022.

The two countries also welcomed the progress in bilateral dialogue and identification of specific opportunities for using India "as a base" for the manufacture and export of defence equipment for friendly countries in the region, the joint statement issued at the end of French President Emmanuel Macron's visit with Prime Minister Narendra Modi said.

France is the first major Western military power with which India has conducted joint patrols with Indian Navy's P-8I maritime patrol aircraft deployed on the French island territory of La Reunion.

"They also welcomed the extension of those interactions in India's maritime neighbourhood. These interactions may contribute positively to the securitisation of strategic sea lanes of communication," the statement said.

CONTINUED ON » PAGE 7

SC intervenes in Calcutta HC judges' spat, issues notice

Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

A five-judge Bench headed by Chief Justice D.Y. Chandrachud, in a special sitting on Saturday, stayed all proceedings in the Calcutta High Court in a medical admissions case, which led to public conflict between two judges of the Calcutta High Court.

The Supreme Court also stayed the implementation of the orders of Justice Abhijit Gangopadhyay, sitting as a Single Judge Bench of the High Court, to transfer the case to the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI).

The Bench issued notice to West Bengal, the CBI, and the petitioner in the High Court. The State government was allowed to separately file a special leave petition against the orders of Justice Gangopadhyay during the course of the day on Saturday. The Centre, in turn, has been permitted to circulate a note.

The five-judge Bench told both the State government and the Centre that it would not want to make any *prima facie* comments at this point. It listed the case for hearing on January 29.

CONTINUED ON » PAGE 7

Women welcome women guests, in Kerala's spice groves

They host travellers looking to explore the State's cultural bounty; over 2,600 entrepreneurs have signed up for the scheme in past two years

John L. Paul
KOCHI

In Kallam Pullu village, about 45 km from Kozhikode, in the foothills of the Western Ghats, Jisha Vinod has 10 acres of farmland bordering a forest. "There is nutmeg, cardamon, coffee, cocoa, Malabar tamarind, and so much other produce here, and I have found women really enjoy it when they come," she says. Ms. Vinod is a farm-tourism entrepreneur, a role facilitated by the Kerala Responsible Tourism Mission Society (KRTMS), a coordinating agency under the government. In 2022, it launched a project to connect women entrepreneurs in tourism with women travellers across India and the world.

Ms. Vinod is part of a network of 2,680 women entrepreneurs running tourism-related businesses in Kerala. Local women host women travellers looking to explore the State's cultural bounty. They provide accommodation and food in homestays, organise travel itineraries, and explore experiential-tourism avenues. They are tour operators, drivers, and facilitators. They have so far hosted 15,980 women.

From coir making to toddy tapping, experiential tourism a popular aspect of this initiative. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

"The initiative helped create 28 women-headed tour companies, with 108 women State-level trainers," said K. Rupesh Kumar, the CEO of KRTMS, while crediting Tourism Minister P.A. Mohammed Riyas for the idea. While the KRTMS has various roles, including ensuring their agri-tourism partners are provided with direct market links to eliminate middlemen, 50% of their funds are being spent on women-oriented participatory tourism. A study in association with UN Women is under way, to identify 76 tourism locales in the State that are women-friendly. As part of this effort, a gender audit is under way in Kumarakom, Kanthalloor, Dharmadam, Kanakakunnu Palace, Kadalundi, and Perumbalam.

A mobile app is being developed to publicise the women-friendly network, while familiarisation trips have been planned in February for women bloggers and vloggers, to promote tourism destinations. The aim is to launch 10,000 women-led enterprises that will provide employment to at least 30,000 women by 2025, he said.

Tourists in short clothes get 'panche' at Hampi temple

The Hindu Bureau
KALABURAGI/MANGALURU

Since Friday, those who turn up in short clothes at Virupaksha temple at the UNESCO World Heritage site of Hampi are being given a 'panche' and a towel by the Vijayanagara district administration.

The administration has kept 500 'panche-towel' sets at the entrance and visitors are asked to don one before entering "to maintain decency and respect the sentiments of other devotees". Deputy Commissioner M.S. Divakara said that it was a "not a dress code" as the administration hadn't imposed a particular type of dress.

Temple tradition

"Hampi is not just a tourist destination; it is also a religious destination. People from across the globe visiting Hampi also visit Virupaksha temple. They are often in shorts, Bermudas, and banians. It does not go well with our temple tradition. So, we have started distributing 'panche' and towels. We are providing it for free and asking tourists to return them as they leave," the Deputy Commissioner said.

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Powerful stride: The all-woman tri-services contingent, led by Captain Sandhya of the Military Police, marches on Kartavya Path during the Republic Day parade. SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

In a first: An all-woman contingent of the Armed Forces Medical Services led by Major Srishti Khullar made history by marching on the Kartavya Path for the first time in New Delhi. SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

Step with honour: The Uttar Pradesh Home Guard women's marching contingent in Lucknow on Friday. SANDEEP SAXENA

Women in command

Women excelled at the Republic Day parade, recording a number of firsts such as 100 women artistes replacing the military band and an all-woman tri-services marching contingent

The 75th Republic Day parade was marked by women power in all spheres, from the opening ceremony to the cultural display. The parade, which showcased the themes of *Viksit* Bharat (developed India) and "India, the mother of democracy", was brought to fulfilment by the women of the nation. For the first time, the parade commenced with musical instruments being played by 100 women artistes instead of the military band. Similarly, an all-woman tri-services contingent marched down Kartavya Path for the first time, making history. Women pilots also participated in the awe-inspiring fly-past where they took to the skies, literally and figuratively. On a similar vein, the women personnel of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) performed daredevil stunts on motorcycles during the parade. The Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF) contingent also consisted only of women personnel. Additionally, in a first, the Delhi Police also had its all-women contingent participating in the parade.

The different tableaux by the States and multiple organisations also had women take centre-stage. The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), for instance, highlighted the landing of Chandrayaan-3 and the women scientists who contributed to it.

A developed India definitely sees women at the helm.

(Text by Joan Sony Cherian)

Patriotic beats: Schoolchildren's band perform in Lucknow. SANDEEP SAXENA

From Page One

Tourists in short clothes get 'panche' at temple to maintain 'decorum'

Vijayanagara Deputy Commissioner M.S. Divakara says those in full dress are not being forced to wear 'panche' while entering the Virupaksha temple. FILE PHOTO

The Deputy Commissioner added that those in full dress are not forced to wear the 'panche' and use the towel. Pointing out that there was no order, he said: "We can only convince and encourage people to be in decent dress while visiting the temple. We took this decision after considering complaints by devotees."

Mangaluru convention

Meanwhile, a convention of hereditary trustees, priests and representatives of management of Hindu places of worship of Dakshina Kannada, held in Mangaluru on Friday, decided to impose a "dress code" on visitors to about 100 privately-controlled temples in the coastal district.

The convention was organised by the Karnataka Devastana, Mutt mattu Dharmika Samstegala Mahasangha. The State convener of the mahasangha Mohan Gowda told *The Hindu* that the decision would come into effect from last week of January.

The "dress code" meant, Mr. Gowda said, the visitors should wear a "decent attire". "Entering temples in shorts, night dress, nighties, ripped jeans or distressed jeans will not be allowed," he said. "Men need not enter the temples by compulsorily wearing dhotis," he clarified, adding that pants and shirts, sari, 'chudidar' would be allowed.

Mr. Gowda said that initially the temples would create awareness on the dress code and convince visitors. The code would be implemented in phases. "Around 50 private temples in Bengaluru too have agreed to implement the dress code. They have begun creating awareness by displaying boards since January 22," he said.

Mr. Gowda said a representation had been given to Endowments Minister Ramalinga Reddy to enforce dress code in temples managed by the Hindu Religious Institutions and Charitable Endowments Department.

Done with your meal or coffee? Please leave, hoteliers request patrons

With customers spending too much time in hotels, the Bruhat Bengaluru Hoteliers' Association has decided to ask the patrons to accommodate other customers, especially during peak hours.

Jahnavi T. R.
BENGALURU

A popular saying in hospitality is, "Do not overstay your welcome". Hoteliers in Bengaluru have the same request for their customers now. With some patrons spending hours in the hotels while only ordering the bare minimum, the hoteliers are losing out on business, which has led them to make this request.

These new guidelines will only be applied in service halls and not darshinis where there is usually a floating crowd. FILE PHOTO

The Bruhat Bengaluru Hoteliers' Association (BBHA) is planning to put up boards in their restaurants asking people to vacate the space after having their meal.

The hotel owners will also ask their captains in the service hall to politely request people who have finished their meals to leave. The members said that this is their way to try to educate their customers to accommodate others, especially during peak hours.

A request, not a rule

"This is not a rule that we will enforce, but it is a request we will make to our customers to maintain minimum time. We want them to spend as much time as they want on food, but sometimes they do not leave after their meals even if there is rush outside," said P.C. Rao, president, BBHA.

Time-consuming customers

The hoteliers said that there are three kinds of conversations that take up too much time in their restaurants: real estate, matrimonial and business discussions. "Apart from this, we also see lawyers spend a long time discussing cases and even some job interviews are conducted over a cup of coffee, which lasts for hours," Mr. Rao said.

These new guidelines will only be applied in service halls and not darshinis where there is usually a floating crowd.

"When the seats at the service hall are occupied, the parking space is also occupied. The fresh customers see both these spaces being occupied and decide to skip the hotel. We neither get business from them nor the customers who are sitting inside without ordering anything," Mr. Rao noted.

Mixed reactions

Customers were divided about this development.

Some said these guidelines would be helpful for everyone. "I have had my share of frustrating experiences at hotels after going there for a good meal, only to find that there are no empty tables because they have been occupied by people who are neither eating nor drinking. While I understand this has been going on for generations, it is high time the hoteliers do something about this and bring in a change," said Sriharsha Muktesh, a resident of Jayanagar, who usually eats out during breakfast and lunch time.

Others felt the restrictions could affect their experience at restaurants. "As long as customers provide business for the restaurants, they should not be imposing such rules. The priority of restaurants should be making it a customer-friendly space," said Samhitha Vinod, a lawyer from Katthriguppe.

GER in higher education up by 0.2% in Karnataka: AISHE

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) of higher education in Karnataka increased by 0.2% compared to the previous year, according to the All India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE), which was recently released by the Union Ministry of Education. While it was 36% in 2020-21, it increased to 36.2% in 2021-22.

The GER of Schedule Caste (SC) and Schedule Tribe (ST) students has also increased by around 2%. In 2020-21, the GER of SC students was 25.6% and ST was 23.4%, while in 2021-22 it increased to 27.2% and 25.8% respectively.

The GER at the all-India level has also increased over the years. GER increased to 28.4% in 2021-22 from 27.3% in 2020-21, 24.6% in 2017-18% and 23.7% in 2014-15. The female GER has increased to 28.5% in 2021-22 from 22.9% in 2014-15.

Number of colleges

Bengaluru Urban district recorded the highest number of colleges at the national level with a total of 1,106 followed by Jaipur with 709, Hyderabad with 491, Pune with 475 and Prayagraj with 398.

Even when it comes to the density of colleges, Karnataka managed to maintain its position at the top of the list in the survey. Since 2017-18, Karnataka has reported the highest density of colleges. It has recorded 66 colleges per lakh population in the recent survey and during 2017-18, it was 51. In 2018-19, the number was 53, while in 2019-20 the density of colleges was 59. In 2020-21, the State reported 62 colleges. The average enrolment in these colleges is 413.

Gross Enrolment Ratio in Karnataka (in %)

Year	All students	SC	ST
2021-22	36.2	27.2	25.8
2020-21	36	25.6	23.4
2019-20	32	23.6	21.3
2018-19	28.8	21.1	19
2017-18	27.9	19.8	17.7

States with highest number of colleges

Karnataka has total of 4,430 higher education institutions and it is the third state which has maximum number of colleges. Uttar Pradesh has the maximum number of colleges, followed by Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu.

Number of teachers

The total number of teachers recorded in the survey is 15,97,688. Of these, 56.6% are male and 43.4% are female teachers. Of the total, 89,770 (5.6%) are Muslim Minority teachers and 1,40,205 (8.8%) are Other Minority teachers.

Among these, 13.1% of the total number of teachers belong to Tamil Nadu, 11.2% are in Uttar Pradesh, 10.5% in Maharashtra and 9.4% in Karnataka. Out of total Muslim teachers, 10.4% are from Karnataka.

Traffic police to collaborate with cab, auto aggregators to gather crowd-sourced data

Darshan Devaiah B.P.
BENGALURU

The Bengaluru Traffic Police (BTP) have collaborated with cab and auto aggregators and other stakeholders to gather crowd-sourced traffic data to improve situational awareness, develop actionable intelligence for officers, and share valuable insights with citizens.

A file photo of an accident involving a car and a two-wheeler on Millers Road - Ali Asker Road junction, in which two people were seriously injured in Bengaluru.

M.N. Anucheth, Joint Commissioner of Police, Traffic, said that as part of the ASTraM (Actionable Intelligence for Sustainable Traffic Management) initiative, aimed at improving traffic management in the city, collaborations have been established with diverse stakeholders. "The primary objective is to offer situational awareness, enabling informed, data-driven decisions to enhance the efficiency of traffic management," he added.

The police have established a 'data lake', integrating information from key stakeholders such as cab aggregators, corporate transport service providers, travel data aggregators, map service providers, accident data, enforcement data, BTP field officer BOT, and social media. This data lake serves as a comprehensive resource, offering insights into the overall road traffic situation in Bengaluru.

According to Mr. Anucheth, the congestion alerts are designed to deliver real-time notifications on traffic congestion to the respective traffic officials every 15 minutes. This system is seamlessly integrated with the e-attendance system, ensuring that alerts are transmitted to both junction jockeys and sector officers, as well as other stakeholders.

This integration aims to enhance traffic planning and management. The traffic police have already focused on eight high density corridors in the city to predict traffic from BTP data lake.

Citizens welcomed the new initiative. Priya Shankar, a resident of Rajajinagar, said, "It's great to see Bengaluru traffic police taking such proactive steps. The collaboration with cab and auto aggregators for crowd-sourced data is surely a game-changer. BTP data lake shows a commitment to using technology for better traffic planning in the city."

Others hope the initiative won't just be a flashy endeavour but will genuinely contribute to reducing traffic congestion. Mohan Kumar, a resident of K.R. Puram, said, "These online initiatives shouldn't be merely fancy apps; they need to have a lasting impact on the ground. The integration of stakeholders and establishment of the BTP data lake is a step towards using technology for more effective traffic planning."

Fire breaks out at Balepet hardware shop

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Material worth ₹25 lakh was destroyed when a three-storeyed hardware shop caught on fire in Balepet on Friday night.

Painting materials were stored on the ground floor of Lakshmi Narasimha traders. The fire was began on the ground floor around 10.30 p.m. and due to the inflammable material, it spread to the other floors.

Fire tenders rushed to the spot and managed to rescue one employee who was stranded on the first floor before dousing the fire after four hours of struggle. No casualties were reported in the accident.

The shop that caught on fire at Balepet in Bengaluru. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

The Upparpete police have registered a case and are investigating to ascertain the exact cause of fire.

Preventive detention steps against drug peddlers

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The police will take preventive detention measures to tackle the drug menace effectively, city police chief B. Dayananda said.

Speaking at the public meeting in Doddakallasandra in Konanakunte police station limits on Saturday, Mr. Dayananda said that the drug menace is also the area of focus this year and to tackle it effectively, some tough measures on the lines of Goonda Act are needed. "The city police have cracked the whip and arrested many peddlers and seized narcotics, including synthetic drugs, which is an area of concern. Apart from creating awareness programmes about drug abuse, the city police is also acting tough on peddlers and their network," he said, adding that the preventive detention initiative is part of the drive which would be launched soon.

DG-IGP Alok Mohan, after a review meeting with senior police officers recently, had said that special focus will be laid on cyber crime and narcotics cases this year.

Four arrested for hacking rowdy to death in Bengaluru

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The Viveknagar police have arrested a gang of four habitual offenders for allegedly hacking a 30-year-old history-sheeter to death at his house early on Wednesday.

According to the police, the accused Sunil, Prashanth, Dhanush and Clement used to have differences with the deceased Satish as the latter used to harass them. On Tuesday night, Satish confronted them at a local bar and humiliated them. Enraged by this, the accused decided to eliminate him. They followed him and waited near his house at night.

Armed with weapons, the four barged in and attacked Satish who was sleeping, killing him on the spot. His minor daughter and wife also sustained injuries in the attack.

Company cheated of ₹13.7 lakh using unused mobile numbers

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The Central Cyber Crime police have registered a case of impersonation against unknown persons for using unused mobile numbers to cheat a financial company and escaping after availing loans worth ₹13.7 lakh.

The fraud came to light when a bank employee, Ashok Krishna, contacted a person, identified as Venkatesh, for defaulting on a loan. The staff were shocked when he clarified that he never availed any loan from their firm. Verification found that the firm had generated a consumer durable loan, business loan, flexi loan through through the mobile numbers he was using in October. After a few EMIs, when there was no response from the customer, the staff tried to call him, but he was not reachable. The firm managed to locate his address and when confronted, Mr. Venkatesh said he never taken any loans and had stopped using the numbers against which the loan was generated and not even recharged them.

Mr. Krishna said that someone had misused those numbers to cheat the firm and availed the loan in Venkatesh's name and escaped with the money.

The police suspect negligence on part of the firm in sanctioning the loan without due diligence, due to unhealthy competition and targets set for the employees. The cyber crime police have registered a case of impersonation and cheating and efforts are on to track down the accused.

Fake email ID under archbishop's name asks people for money

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The East Division Cyber Crime Police have registered an FIR against unknown people who created an email ID in the name of the Peter Machado, the Archbishop of Bengaluru, trying to cheat the congregation for monetary gain.

Based on the complaint by Kanthraj J.A., from the administrative office of the Archbishop, the police have swung into action and trying to track down the accused.

The accused had created the ID in October last year and were sending mails to people in the congregation and the community with misleading information and also demanding money.

Many people have responded to the mail and one of them has also been cheated financially, said the police. The police have sought the details of the transaction to track down the accused.

Timings
BENGALURU

SUNDAY, JAN. 28		
RISE	06:46	SET 18:18
RISE	20:31	SET 08:32
MONDAY, JAN. 29		
RISE	06:46	SET 18:19
RISE	21:16	SET 09:08
TUESDAY, JAN. 30		
RISE	06:46	SET 18:19
RISE	22:00	SET 09:42

Bengaluru Weather	max	min
Tumakuru	30	20
Mysuru	30	19
Bengaluru	29	16

Bengaluru Today
30°C A dry weather to prevail. Morning will be cool with mist and haze. Day will be slight warm. Night also will be cool and hazy.

Bengaluru Tomorrow
29°C The weather will be dry. Morning will be cool with mist and haze. Day will be slight warm. Night will be slight cool and hazy.

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Fearless and fabulous: The women contingent of the Central Reserve Police Force performing motorcycle stunts during the Republic Day celebrations in New Delhi on Friday. Over 260 women showcased their valour and determination through varied formations. SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

In forefront: A school band leader during the parade in Lucknow on Friday. SANDEEP SAXENA

Great enthusiasm: Women personnel in a marching contingent of the Central Industrial Security Force in New Delhi. PTI

Military tradition: Women personnel of the Border Security Force during the beating retreat ceremony at the Attari-Wagah border between India and Pakistan, near Amritsar on Friday. PTI

Braveheart on wheels: Assistant Commandant Seema Nag of the CRPF's 'Daredevils' team during the parade in New Delhi. PTI

Metro services between M.G. Road and Baiyyappanahalli stations hit

Train services returned to normal by 11 a.m. on the Purple Line between Challaghatta and Whitefield, according to a Bangalore Metro Rail Corporation Ltd. official

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Namma Metro services on the Purple Line were disrupted for around two hours on Saturday leading to outrage among commuters. The services were not available between the M.G. Road and Baiyyappanahalli metro stations owing to a technical snag, the Bangalore Metro Rail Corporation Limited (BMRCL) officials said.

While there was an official announcement about the Green Line metro services not being available between Peenya Industry and Nagasandra metro stations for three days (January 26 - 28), the disruption in Purple Line was sudden. This led to many commuters being stranded, mostly in the M.G. Road and Indiranagar metro stations for a long time, awaiting a train. "Bengaluru is still grappling with proper metro services. If there is any maintenance planning, the same should be considered without affecting daily services. Sudden outages of Namma metro services disrupt everyone's plans and create a commotion like today," Alan Desousa, a social media user said on X.

A technical snag impacted metro services between M.G. Road and Baiyyappanahalli metro stations for a few hours on Saturday. FILE PHOTO

Other services

Some commuters complained that while they were asked to evacuate the stations after some time, other services inside the metro station were also affected in the morning.

"Still waiting for details of "some maintenance work". Meanwhile, all passengers have been asked to exit the metro station premises stating that there was a power failure. Even escalators are not working," Adinath, a commuter, who was at one of the purple line stations, said on X.

The train services on the Purple Line were running only between M.G. Road and Challaghatta and Baiyyappanahalli and Whitefield (Kadugodi) from 9.15 a.m. until 11 a.m.

"Normalcy of train services was restored from 11 a.m. on the Purple Line between Challaghatta and Whitefield," a BMRCL official said.

Boy murdered

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

A six-year-old boy was found murdered and dumped on a railway track near the district stadium in Ramanagara on Saturday.

The police suspect that boy was sodomised before being murdered and are waiting for his identification to get approval from the family for post mortem. They have detained a youth who was moving suspiciously in the area and are questioning him.

The police are checking for missing complaints or reports of missing boys from in and around the area to ascertain the victim's identity.

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For More Details, Contact : Executive Engineer
KIADB, Zonal Office, Tumakuru, Maruthi Groups Building, 2nd Floor, Near SIT College, Main Gate, B.H. Road, Tumakuru - 572103.
Email – dotumakuru@kiadb.in Website: www.kiadb.in
Contact Details: 99029 33944 / 95387 46961 / 9449626995

Location
KIADB Residential Layout Area, Gamanagatti Industrial Area, Hubli-Dharwad City

Sl. No	Plots Details	No of Plots	Plot size in Sq. mtr.
1	EWS	123	6.10x9.14
2	LIG	83	9.14x12.19
3	MIG	65	9.14x15.24
4	HIG	44	12.19x18.29
	Total	315	-

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- Litigation free and Clear Title with availability of 24/7 Electricity & Water
- Close to major economic hubs with good connectivity and accessibility

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Gamanagatti Layout

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For More Details, Contact : Executive Engineer KIADB, Zonal Office, Dharwad, Lakkammanhalli, Industrial Area, Poona-Bangalore Road, Dharwad 560004.
Email – dodharwad@kiadb.in Website: www.kiadb.in
Contact Details: 9845806948 / 9448580835 / 8762191753

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KIADB Residential Layout Area, Raichur City

Sl. No	Plots Details	No of Plots	Plot size in Sq. mtr.
1	EWS	111	6X9m
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3	MIG	253	9X15m
4	HIG	88	12X18m
	Total	541	

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Raichur Residential Layout

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Email – doballari@kiadb.in, Website: www.kiadb.in
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KAMMA NAIDU, 28/168 , MDS.,BPS., (Prosthodontics & Implantology), Certified BPS Specialist, Uthiratathi, Meenam, Mesham. Seeks Doctor Groom. Ph: 98421 31535.

BALIJA NAIDU M.B.B.S Kettai, Viruchikam 26/165 fair good looking girl, Kanchipuram seeks Doctor (or) Professionally settled from Naidu families Contact: 9443380196, 9442202555

✔ **GAVARA NAIDU** 24/165 MBBS (Attending PG Coaching),Kettai Upper Middle Class in Coimbatore seeking Doctor groom MD,MS,Doing PG or Professionals. Avoid IT, Abroad. Sub sects no bar. 98426 50751,98653 01920

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HINDU TAMIL Yadava 26 MS Surgery PG Tall Fair Good Looking, Mother Vellalar/Mukkulathor.Parents Seeks Good habit doctors / doctorates with good family background.Ct. 7200365364

SEEKING ALLIANCE for MD Doctor girl, from PG doctors only. (DOB:21/7/88). Ph:70129 67871

MUDHALIYAR: AGE 26, Fair, Cast no Bar. MBBS (DCH). Seeks Doctor or any suitable groom. Ct : 78240 23030

NADAR HINDU: 27y, Fair. MBBS (DGO) . Seeks Doctor or Any Suitable Groom. Contact : 93635 70731

KANNADA MADHWA Brahmin Girl 25 MD Seeks Professionally Qualified Groom. 9944570175, 9789788673.

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Reputed Reddy Family in Chennai Invites Alliance for Daughter 32/165, Doctor MBBS, MS, Looking for Tall Educated Groom from affluent family CNB.

Call: 89256 40111

30Y/F MBBS; MD, Divorced-no child. Preferred Groom-from TN/early 30's / Doctors / Divorced - no child / Caste no bar. Ph: 9442145470

DOCTOR GIRL 30/153, MBBS, seeks Tamil Hindu Doctor Groom. Contact: 8056325579.

DOCTOR GIRL 30/156, MBBS, MD General Medicine, Madurai seeks Doctor/UPSC grooms 9447493034, 9497168001

MALAYALAM

NAIR GIRL 31.5.1979/165 MCA HSBC Hyderabad Pooyam seeks professionally qualified & employed Nair boy. Excuse Second marriage. Ct: 9176612696

HINDU THIYYA, 35, 5' 3', Punartham. MTech, Southern Railway Electrical Engineer. Settled Kannur Kerala seeks suitable groom. E-mail: kmrn97@gmail.com

NRI

CHRISTIAN FAMILY settled in USA seeking groom for their daughter (29/160cm IT engineer, never married). Looking for groom settled in USA. Phone:7305407185 (India) +1 5104495282 (USA/WhatsApp)

TAMIL

TAMIL CATHOLIC Doctor parents having own hospital looking for highly educated, cultured, affluent groom, preferably doctor, for their fair, beautiful doctor girl, 31/162 Ct: 9448123480

LOOKING FOR suitable groom, preferably Doctor, for a very fair, beautiful, Tamil/ English Catholic girl, MD/ 29/157 from an affluent, cultured family. Contact: 9945530186

CSI NADAR, 27/172cm, B.TECH/ MS in Canada, 5 Lakhs per month. Seeks Suitable Groom Contact: 9380791999

TAMIL Muslim 24/157 MD pathology seeks prof qualified groom Ct: 8220042091 mdullahsafi@gmail.com

TAMIL

SEEKING MUSLIM Groom with permanent income above 40 yrs willing to settle with Non–transferable working SMU bride first marriage 9788634884

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TAMIL MUSLIM girl (24/5'7"). B.E working in Singapore. Need religious person with professional qualification and working in Singapore. Contact 9841981166 / 9841980096

CATHOLIC VELLALAR Girl 31 /171 MBBS MPH student visa Texas, USA Seeks professional from USA Ct:9150153743

GROOM WANTED Rich Mudaliyar, 31yrs, MBBS, MS, Own Hospitals, Well Educated Family. 9710093999/ 8939691888

REDDIYAR, 27YRS, B.Tech, Elite Business Family in Chennai. Seeks Suitable Groom Ct:9710093999/ 8939691888

THANJAVUR Agamudayar, MBBS, MD, 29 years fair seeks BC doctor/ CA/Bank/UPSC groom. 94430 10858.

48/163 MUDALIAR/PILLAI, M.com, MBA, Seeks Qualified Unmarried Below 50, Clean habits, CNB. Ct: 9444837355/ 9500113136 anbumatri@gmail.com

HINDU MUTHURAJA, 29 / 155 / BE / Software Engineer in UK. Seeks Groom in UK . Caste No Bar. 99444 00307, 89034 21862.

HINDU PILLAI TAMIL 40/M, MCA, divorced (Sub caste no bar) working abroad Looking for educated Widows/ Divorced girl age <35 yrs with no - kids from good family background Contact: matrimonialadto@gmail.com.

HINDU Devendra Kula Vellalar 28 / 160cm, B.E. NIT, Trichy working in Bangalore 5LPA. Devendra Kula Vellalar and above Preferred MBC, BC, and OC. CT: 6381564391 / 8825927070.

SC,34YRS B.TECH, Manager, Govt Bank, Divorcee, Unconsumated. Contact Mobile: 8939574245

ISAI VELLALAR Pillai / Sengunda Mudaliyar 26/MBA/Software Employee, Chennai Seeks Well Qualified/Employed Groom. Father NLC Executive (Retd) Mother CBSE Teacher Elder sister married. Cell: 9443837685 / 8870522456

GROOM WANTED Rich Mudaliyar, 23yrs, MBA (UK), Elite business family in Chennai. Ct:9710093999/ 8939691888

GROOM WANTED Rich Naidu, 31yrs, BE, MBA, Divorce, Elite business family in Chennai. 9710093999/ 8939691888

AGAMUDI MUDALIAR Elite Family 32/ 165 Mirugasim, Raghu in Lagnam PG (HR MNC) Seeks IIM/PG Groom. 9176780777

WELL SETTLED Hindu Nadar 27, MBA, Divorce Seeks Married/Unmarried, CNB,Educated, Chennai Groom 9047582233

MUDALIAR / PILLAI 36 fair Hastham MCA Well settled in Chennai Seeks Prof Quaf Working Groom 8220757159

SC(AD), 24YRS, BE, Well Educated family in Chennai. Seeks Suitable Groom. Contact: 9710093999/ 8939691888

PILLAI / MUDALIAR, 34, MD, Well Settled family seeks Groom aged 34-36 yrs, Engineer/ Business/ Doctor. Contact: 9345855735

✔ **HINDU NADAR, Fair Girl MBBS, MD–Y1, 24/160, Rich Affluent, Seeks suitable Good looking Doctor Groom with clean habits, from Hindu Nadar only. MN: 9444968235**

MUDALIAR GIRL 27/BE working/ Bengaluru/ from well to do family with moral values seeks Hindu Groom with similar background. Ct: 7975421774

HINDU MUDALIAR DOB 25.08.1995, 09:38 PM, No dosham, 154cm, B.E., MBA, fair, good looking. Father Mudaliar, Mother Adidravida, Caste no bar. Chennai settled boy preferred. Email photo & details to: k.l.thirupavai@gmail.com

MUDALIAR/26/5'3"/ BROWN/ MA Eng. Asst professor in Chennai Pvt. College/ Moolam/ Middle class/ seeks Religious/ Atheist bridegroom families of equivalent castes from India/Abroad. 9444075410 rys.legend@hotmail.com

MUDALIAR (CNB) 25/160, V. Fair& Beautiful, B.E, MS(USA) Associate Developer, MNC, USA, Elite Family, Seeks groom Abroad/Business– 8925019776

MUDALIAR 25/162, Fair, MBBS, DNB–Doing, 600000.PA, Kovai, Affluent Family, CNB. 9043991629, 7299576666

TAMIL

GROOM WANTED Rich Mudaliyar 30yrs BE MBA 35lakhs p/a, Well Educated Family Chennai. 9710093999/ 8939691888

GROOM WANTED Rich Naidu 30yrs BE, Working In MNC, Elite business family in Chennai. 9710093999/ 8939691888

VADAKALAI IYENGAR, 28yrs 5'4" Mrigaseerisham 2, B.Tech 20 LPA Seeks good family well educated Iyengar groom, preferably Simple marriage. Ct: 9841385737 / delta8488@gmail.com

Alliance invited for
Tamil Gounder
(Caste no bar),
Chennai Girl
from a reputed business family
31/165, Good looking, B.Arch,
working in family business (Chennai),
looking for a Qualified boy,
preferably settled in
Chennai, Bangalore
Decent profession /
Business (any Industry)
Ct: 98943 98674 / 73585 10790

BRIDEGROOM WANTED

CHETTIYAR Senthamizh age 29 yrs, 160 cm Aswini Mesam MBBS, MD, (working), seeks **Doctor/ IAS/ IPS/ Businessman/ Professionals.** Cast no bar & Good family background.

Call: 9840125521
Email: sendhu94@gmail.com

Hindu Nadar, 29yrs/160cm Moolam/ Dhanush, B.Tech(CS) Working-CISCO Bangalore, 19L Pa seeks groom with Similar Educational and Professional background. Contact: 91768 00819

Hindu Adidravida Hastham 28/156cm BE Mnc 16L pa seeks suitable Alliance from Govt, PSU, IT. Ct: 94441 55781

Doctor / Hindu Devendrakulam MBBS 29/168cm Working in Chennai, Decent Family, Good Looking seeks suitable groom Pref. Doctor/ other Professional. Mail Id: shanmugaraj0717@gmail.com

HINDU Nadar 35/165cms ME, working in Chennai and Bangalore, 30 Lacs PA own house divorcee no issue Dhanusu Poradam-4 seeks suitable Educated 35-39yrs groom working in Chennai & Bangalore. 9444174503 / 9444475113

Muthuraja (Ambalakarar), 28/159cm, BE MA, Well settled in Chennai. Fair Girl seeking Chennai settled Groom. Contact: 9444335111/9444758668.

B.Tech Divorcee, Mudaliyar Good looking Girl born on Aug 93, well settled at Hyd wkg in MNC drawing 12L PA salary seeks Groom Engineers below 34Y from decent fmly Ct: 9866229004

TELUGU

BALIJA NAIDU, 28/152cm, Fair, PG, MNC Chennai Ct: 6380984534 / saanvigklr@gmail.com

CHENNAI BASED Reddy girl ,doctor (MD ,respiratory medicine) 29yrs, 5.2" Father is a doctor/ dermatologist.Looking for a suitable groom, doctor (MD)/IIT Engineers from the same community. Preferably from Chennai/ Hyderabad/ Bengaluru Pls contact: skogili@yahoo.com , Mob:9840803623

NAIDU FAIR 36/165 MD, Asst Professor 2Lakh p.m Govt seeks suitable groom, Caste no bar. CT: 98944 28574

NAIDU MBA/36/MNC Divorcee NoChild Pooram/Simmam Seeks Suitable Groom from Chennai/Bangalore Ct:8778265716

✔ Good Looking Doctor Naidu Girl August 1994 born, 172cm pursuing MD in Chennai seeking Doctor / Professional Groom from good family background. Ph: 9840496795

BRIDEGROOM WANTED

RC Naidu GIRL 28/ 162cm, Masters in the US with work experience in Boston. Currently in Chennai. Parents- Chennai based well settled Business family. Looking for a tall and smart groom from an affluent family in the US or Chennai.

Contact: 9444072121

SC, 32yrs/152cm, PharmD, Pursuing Ph.D, Divorcee, No kids, Seeks Groom- India & abroad, Caste No bar, ct.9700019949.

42, Inter-Religion Telugu speaking, upper middle class, never married, software engineer, Bangalore. No religion preference. Ph: 9182734077.

URDU

SEEKING SUNNI-MUSLIM Professionally qualified boy from South India, settled in Australia/Canada with PR, 5'8" and above, 30 yrs & below, for NRI girl M.Tech employed very fair, 5'5", 25 yrs. Cont: India – 9440518725 or Father in UAE – 00971506213898.

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SC/AD/42/170 CM./18 Lacs PA Fair & Handsome Working in World Wide Company, Caste no bar. Cont: 9790819290

BENGALURU BASED, Software Professional, 6 ft / 1971 born – fair, vegetarian, Tamil, Hindu Yadava – Male (divorced), Ayilyam seeks proposals from suitable, educated Hindu women preferably from Bengaluru. Caste no bar. Please email shankris2022@gmail.com / call 91 90085 42820 with details.

DIVORCEE

SEEKING BRIDE for 33–yr boy I Issueless divorcee Puducherryl B.Tech MBA [IIT] working in MNC Bangalorel Tamil Vishwakarma, CNB Cont. 9686107007

ALLIANCE INVITED for Brahmin Iyer boy ,Clean habits, Avittam Kaundinyam, 29/182(Divorced, non consummated) CA–Employed –MNC – Chennai, from Qualified Religious minded Iyer girl without issues from respectable family, Ph:8454056770

Bride without issues for a 45 year old Hindu Cardiologist Divorcee without issues 9497801531

TAMIL

Mumbai Settled Thevar- Iyer Parentage handsome unmarried 28 / 5.10" BE, IT Manager 15 Lac P.A, seeks bride. Caste no bar. Cont: +918095387025.

RC CHRISTIAN Nadar, Age 25, MBBS., MD 2nd Year (General Medicine) Chennai Doctor Seeks Good Looking and caring doctor bride from good family, below 24 years. Ph: 8072411192 / princevijayraj25@gmail.com

VANNIYAR 28 180 BTech Nitk SWE in MNC 30 LPA at Bangalore with low vision in left eye seeks suitable Bride same caste ph 9324324617

GOVT OFFICER 56, Separated,Reside in Coimbatore Seeks Well Settled, Independent Woman Age40–52 as a lifelong companion& Soulmate. CastenoBar mducbe18@gmail.com Call:9585245551

NAIDU: CASTE No Bar – 25Y, Fair, MBBS. Father Lot Business. Seeks Suitable Doctor. Ch any Dist:7824023030

AGE 35, Handsome, Affluent Groom wants Bride with 10Crore Asset. Marriage, Remarriage, Divorce 7401489892

TAMIL

VANNIYAR, MS(USA) 30/172 Swathi Fair, Employed in USA seeks well educated suitable bride. Ct: 9444678830.

BRIDE WANTED SC(Ad) 28yrs B. Arch,Own Constructions in Chennai Elite Business family 9710093999/ 8939691888

REMARRIAGE SENGUNTHAR 39/165 BE, SWE, MNC Seeks Good Looking Girl without Child 155cm Educated 9443943012

MUDALIAR, 19–10–1989/6'2", Thiruvadirai, Mithunam, BE, MBA, IT sector,11 LPA, CHE, seeks a good looking, grad, employed girl btw 28–31 yr from a good family, 8056119148.

HINDU KONGU Vellala Gounder 37/183 Sadayam, B.Sc, MBA Job, Business 30L PA. Working Chennai Upper Middle Class. Suitable Girl any Degree, Any Caste in BC. Whatsapp: 9360323979

NAIDU, B.Tech, MBA, 6 feet, 45 yrs, young looking, unmarried, SWE, 25 LPA, Chennai, Teetotaller, UMC seeks working bride. CNB, FC, OBC. 9443999554, 9442500222. jokannan1975@gmail.com

RC PILLAI 43/170 8Lakhs p/m working in Singapore Divorced Seeks Suitable Bride Caste No Bar Ct:9047192999

TAMIL

MUDALIYAR MBA Govt Physically Challenge Groom Seeks Normal,Orphan Bride 12th Any Deg No Caste 9042025353

MUDALIAR DIVORCEE Phd,College Professor, 50,Magaram, Seeks Educated Unmarried Widow Divorcee(age 40–45) , FC/OBC No Expectation Ct:9150799959

CASTE NO Bar 1st Marriage 1978, Midunam, Civil Contractor well settled, Seeks Bride. Ct: 9087865951

AGAMUDAYAR/THULUVA VELLALAR 30yrs, Magam, MBBS, MS 1st year(Govt Service) seeks Doctor Bride from same community. 9443702866

HINDU NADAR 27/175cm, BE, MBA–IIM, Monthly Income 3 Lakhs. Seeks Suitable Bride Contact: 9380791999

HINDU PARKAVA Udayar 33/172cm Color Computer Engg USA 50Lak Salary Divorced, No Child Chennai. 9443319755

BRAHMIN IYER VADULAM Uthiram Nov 1977 BSc(MCA)MNC, IT 24Lakh PA Seeks unmarried Brahmin Girl 9841071359

IYER B.charanam/ Koundinyam/ Avitam 1988 B.Com/ MBA working pvt firm getting 4.5 LPA seeks working bride. 9443132445.

BRAHMIN (TELUGU) 46 (Divorce with issues, kids are with the mother) 5'10" Good Looking/ MBA, B.E, Software / Hyd, settled, Good Family Seeks Suitable 1st Marriage Brahmin Bride - prefer Telugu/ Tamil (between 33-38 yrs), Job not necessary, any degree education, Call; 9515349877

UNMARRIED TEETOTALLER postgraduate own business 58 Iyer boy seeks alliance from unmarried Iyer girls. Widows & divorcees excuse. 9447496006

BRIDE WANTED

Good Looking Groom
Bharani Natchathiram
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Monthly Sal. 5 Lakhs
Need Bride Age Above 27.
9345 161 848

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30 yrs / 172 cm
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6382086919 / 8508099103

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SAIVA VELLALAR / B. Tech-Mech SNU, Noida / Masters in Supply Chain Management - Sustainability UNSW, Sydney / now Category Specialist, Melbourne / Fair - Fit - Handsome /28/5.7/Moolam – Moondram padam / affluent family from Chennai settled for more than three generations / Parent's and sibling are professionals – nuclear family/ Looking for professionally qualified bride / appreciate response along with horoscope to
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HINDU Devendra Kula Vellalar 38 / 165cm, Simmam / Pooram, B.E.Mech Engg., 30 LPA for Agriculture only, Devendra Kulla Vellalar and above Preferred MBC, BC, and OC. CT: 6381564391 / 9884068956.

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THE HINDU

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TIRUCHENDUR NADAR 30/186 MPT Physiotherapist Chennai with Clean Habits & Character seeks Well Educated, Good Personality & Family 9791167569

INTERCASTE (BC&FC), Chennai, 45y/ 5'7", IT, BE MS, Divorcee (Short lived marriage; No kids), Clean habits. Seeks Bride. Caste No Bar. Ct: 9790911710

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MUDALIAR/ PILLAI, DOB:29.05.93/ 183cm, BE,MS(USA) N.Veg,Working in USA,Seeks Suitable Bride(25–28yr) Studying/Working in USA,Mother:9003713942

29, BE, Ele, Railway, Chennai, Intercaste Seeks from State, Central, IT Caste no bar, with progressive mind. Cont. 9444413568 / 9003149239

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INBRIEF

Special cover released to commemorate 75th R-Day

The Department of Posts, Karnataka Circle, has released a special cover to commemorate the 75th Republic Day. L.K. Dash, Postmaster General, Bengaluru Headquarters Region, released the special cover.

The special cover is available for sale at the Bengaluru GPO from Saturday. It will also be available at Belagavi, Mangaluru, and Mysuru Philatelic Bureaus at a later date, the Department of Posts, Karnataka Circle, in a release said.

Wipro GE Healthcare, IISc. to bridge gap in healthcare

Wipro GE Healthcare, a medical technology, diagnostics, and digital solutions innovator, entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Indian Institute of Science (IISc.) for an alliance to advance healthcare innovation, research, and technology development in India.

This collaboration aims to take a comprehensive approach in solving the care gap by addressing the full lifecycle that includes co-developing solutions, validating the technologies, and manufacturing them locally, according to Wipro GE Healthcare.

Civil society group releases manifesto for LS elections

Forum for Democracy and Communal Amity, Karnataka chapter, on Saturday released "Manifesto for Lok Sabha Election - 2024" in Bengaluru, emphasising the need to shun communal politics and focus on real issues of the people.

The forum, in a release, said, "There is an atmosphere of fear and apprehension in the mind of the common man because of hate politics. The parties coming to power should not indulge in hate politics, divisive sectarian and casteist agenda, and polarisation."

BJP plans a series of programmes in run-up to Lok Sabha elections

Women's convention, 'Nari Shakti Vandana', will be held at the taluk and district levels before February 25; party to stage demonstrations against govt.'s 'anti-farmer' and 'anti-Dalit' policies

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

In the run-up to the Lok Sabha polls, the Karnataka BJP on Saturday chalked out a series of programmes, including a women's convention at the district level, a wall painting campaign with the slogan "BJP for the third time, Modi once again" in each hobli, and beneficiary meetings.

These were discussed at the party's executive committee meeting, the first to be helmed by the new State chief B.Y. Vijayendra, held in Bengaluru.

The meeting was inaugurated by Union Minister Bhupender Yadav, who said that the people of Karnataka were firmly behind Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Briefing presspersons after the meeting, the BJP spokesperson Ashwathnarayana said it has been decided that meetings would be held in all districts from February 3 to 5.

He said the women's convention - "Nari Shakti Vandana" - will be held at the taluk and district levels before February 25.

"It has been decided that the party will meet beneficiaries of Central schemes, women, self-help groups, and will hold taluk and district-level conventions involving them," he said. The wall painting campaign at the booth level will be organised on January 30 across the State. "One or two walls in each of the 58,000 booths in the State will be painted," he said.

BJP State president B.Y. Vijayendra and leaders Pralhad Joshi, Bhupender Yadav, B.S. Yediyurappa, Basavaraj Bommai, R. Ashok, and Jagadish Shettar at the party's State executive meeting in Bengaluru on Saturday. K. MURALI KUMAR

The executive committee adopted a resolution condemning the Congress government in Karnataka for allegedly diverting ₹11,000 crore, earmarked for the welfare of Dalits and the oppressed classes, for its guarantee schemes.

The BJP State general secretary Pritam Gowda said that the party has decided to hold district-level demonstrations against the government's "anti-farmer" and "anti-Dalit" policies.

Another resolution was passed congratulating Mr. Modi for successfully completing the consecration of the Ram temple in Ayodhya. At the inaugural session, a Rama idol was offered milk *abhisheka*.

Former Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa, who spoke at the inaugural session, said the party has strengthened with Jagadish Shettar's re-entry. "Let us resolve to win all 28 seats and give more power to Mr. Modi," he said, raising the "Jai Sri Ram" slogan.

Speaking on the occasion, Mr. Vijayendra alleged that Hindu activists were being targeted by the Congress government.

Although over 800 party functionaries and workers attended the meeting, many disgruntled members, such as V. Somanna, Basanagouda Patil Yatnal, S.T. Somashekar, and Shivaram Hebbar, were conspicuous by their absence.

LS election in-charge

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The BJP on Saturday appointed election in-charges and co-in-charges for 23 States and Union Territories.

Rajya Sabha member Radha Mohan Das Agarwal has been appointed as in-charge of Karnataka. He will take over from general secretary Arun Singh. The BJP's in-charge for political affairs in Puducherry, Nirmala Kumar Surana, has been made co-in-charge for the polls.

Likewise, the party has appointed election in-charges for the 28 Lok Sabha constituencies.

Shamanur urges voters to re-elect Raghavendra

Senior Congress leader Shamanur Shivashankarappa and B.Y. Raghavendra, BJP MP, at a programme in Shivamogga on Friday. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

The Hindu Bureau
SHIVAMOGGA

Senior Congress leader and Davangere South MLA Shamanur Shivashankarappa embarrassed his party by appealing to the people of Shivamogga to re-elect BJP MP B.Y. Raghavendra in the Lok Sabha polls, considering his "focus on development works."

Mr. Shivashankarappa is also the president of the Akhila Bharata Veerashaiva Mahasabha, and Mr. Raghavendra, son of former Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa, also belongs to the same community.

The Congress leader was speaking after accepting the "Guru Basava Shree" award presented at an event organised by Bekkina Kalmatha in Shivamogga on Friday evening.

Mr. Shivashankarappa, who served as Minister in the Congress government earlier, said the people of Shivamogga were fortunate to have Mr. Raghavendra as their representative. "It would not be wrong to say that Mr. Raghavendra gave attention to all the work that needed to be done for the constituency and got them executed even if they were beyond his abilities. Anyhow, within two months, there would be Lok Sabha elections. The BJP would definitely field him again. It would be your responsibility to get him elected considering the development works," he said, with Mr. Raghavendra seated next to him.

Mr. Yediyurappa, responding to this later, praised the "magnanimity" of the leader who could look beyond party affiliations.

'Congress will win'

When asked about the incident, KPCC president and Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar said, "I don't know exactly what he has said. But the Congress will win the Shivamogga seat. The Congress will win more seats than the Opposition in Karnataka this time."

Yatnal's sugar factory paid ₹1.5 cr. fine to Centre, says Khandre

The Hindu Bureau
KALABURAGI

Dismissing allegations by the BJP leader and Vijayapura MLA Basanagouda Patil Yatnal on a closure notice by the Karnataka State Pollution Control Board (KSPCB), for a sugar factory operated by Siddhasiri Souharda Sahakari Niyamit (SSSN), run by a co-operative bank of which he is president, Minister for Forests, Ecology and Environment Eshwar Khandre said that there was no political motivation and the board was simply following the laws of the land.

Speaking to the media at Kalaburagi here on Saturday, Mr. Khandre also revealed that the Union government had imposed a fine of ₹1.5 crore on the sugar factory for non-compliance of environment norms and the factory had paid it.

"In a meeting of the KSPCB a week ago, I had directed officials to take stringent action against all factories that violate environment norms. When I gave this direction, I did not even know that Mr. Yatnal's sugar factory was one among the violators. Subsequently, the KSPCB has issued notices to many. Mr. Yatnal's factory operating at Chincholi taluk in Kalaburagi district is one among them. The law will take its course," Mr. Khandre said.

'Political pressure'

In his post on X (formerly Twitter), Mr. Yatnal had said that closing his factory "due to political pressure" would not achieve anything and he was determined to reopen the factory by taking legal recourse.

"The Union government, one-and-a-half years ago, imposed a fine of ₹1.5 crore on the same factory for non-compliance of environment norms and Mr. Yatnal had paid the fine. Was the move of the Centre led by his own party also politically motivated? Even after paying the penalty, he did not get the necessary permissions from the competitive authorities to run the factory," said Mr. Khandre.

Meanwhile, Assistant Commissioner (Sedam) Ashappa Pujari visited the factory and directed the authorities to close the factory with immediate effect.

Govt. issues norms for farm machinery hubs to address labour shortage during harvesting

The Hindu Bureau
BELAGAVI

The State government has issued guidelines to help farmers' groups set up farm machinery hubs in rural areas. This will enable farmers to take crop harvesters on hire for a short time, use them, and return them.

The State Cabinet cleared the scheme in its meeting in November. As per the plan, the total number of hubs planned is 91, and the average number of hubs planned for each district ranges from two to 10. The scheme is aimed at supporting increased mechanisation and addressing the problem of labour shortage during the harvest season.

Farm machinery hubs are meant to enable farmers take crop harvesters on hire for a short time, use, and return them.

"Individual farmers are also eligible to apply for the scheme," said G.T. Putra, Director, Department of Agriculture. Individual beneficiary can avail subsidy up to 50% while institutions can claim up to 70%.

Rural entrepreneurs, who are either youth, cooperative societies of farmers, registered farmers' societies or farmer producer organisations (FPOs), can establish an agriculture machinery hub. An in-principle loan sanction letter will be given to the selected beneficiary.

As per the detailed guidelines issued on January 20, the hubs will be called Krishi Yantra Dhare centres. They will be categorised based on the crop pattern, machinery used, and ownership style. The maximum subsidy for different categories of hubs is – ₹1 crore for combo harvester hubs, ₹50 lakh for combined harvester hubs, and ₹50 lakh for sugarcane harvester hubs. The benefits will be distributed among group, individual, general, and SC/ST farmers.

A committee headed by the zilla panchayat CEO will screen applications. The district committee will supervise the process of establishing hiring tariff and maintenance operations. This is to see that the hubs are not out of the reach of small and marginal farmers.

It is an extension of the centrally aided Sub Mission on Agricultural Mechanisation (SMAM) scheme, where the Centre contributes around 40% of the subsidy. The Centre provides credit-linked back-ended financial assistance in which beneficiaries will get subsidy after taking loans, where the project cost is higher than ₹1 crore.

But the State government's scheme is aimed at clusters where the project cost is under ₹1 crore, a senior official said.

Hit by a shortage of funds, Kannada University seeks ₹133 crore budgetary support from State government

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Kannada University, Hampi, which has for some years been facing severe fund crunch for even paying electricity bills, salaries to guest faculty, and building maintenance works, has sought ₹133 crore budgetary support from the State government during 2024-25.

The State's lone university promoting the Kannada language has been entirely dependent on the government for funds. Unlike other universities, Kannada University has no internal resources for mobilisation of funds. The PhD registration fee (about ₹25 lakh per year), paid by students, was the only source for the university.

Kannada University at Hampi was set up in 1991. FILE PHOTO

The State's lone university promoting the Kannada language has been entirely dependent on the government for funds

A couple of months ago, Gulbarga Electricity Supply Company (GESCOM) officials stopped the supply of electricity to the university for a whole day owing to the non-payment of electricity bills, sources said.

The university, set up in 1991, has demanded ₹133 crore, including ₹73 crore funds for development works. The university demanded ₹72 crore development fund in 2023-24, but the government granted only ₹1.5 crore.

All development works in the university have come to a halt following negligible financial support from the government, sources said.

Located near the historical site of Hampi, the university campus "Vidyaranya" is spread over 700 acres. Unlike other universities which are largely confined to one district, Kannada University has jurisdiction over the entire State. It has set up over two dozen extension centres across Karnataka.

The shortage of faculty is another issue the university has been facing for the past few years. Nearly 40 teaching faculty posts are vacant at the campus at Hampi, sources said.

The university, which undertakes publications, has come out with over 1,600 books so far.

OBITUARY & REMEMBRANCE

DEATH ANNIVERSARIES

2nd Death Anniversary
Always loved, forever missed

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DR. C.R.DAKSHINAMURTHI
MS
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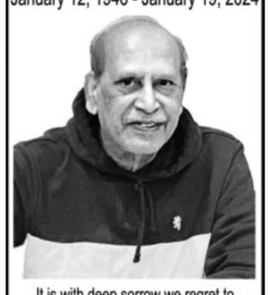
Reunited with his beloved wife Saroja.
May they both Rest in Peace.

DEATH

IN LOVING MEMORY OF
SHRI. PRABHAKAR RAO KOKA
January 12, 1946 - January 19, 2024



It is with deep sorrow we regret to inform you that our dear father, PRABHAKAR RAO KOKA has passed away on January 19th, 2024 in California, surrounded by his children and loved ones
Funeral Service
at 7am PST on January 27th 2024
Fremont, California, USA
Shradhanjali
at 10am PST on January 29th 2024
In Fremont, California, USA
Deeply Mourned by his Children
Hema Koka, Srilatha Koka,
Aneesh Koka and their Families
OM SHANTHI

After tussle, Centre gives Z-plus security cover to Governor Khan

He stages sit-in after student outfit waves black flags at him; he seeks copy of FIR on the incident and alleges Kerala police is going slack on his security at CM's instance; Union Minister Muraleedharan says attacks point to collapse of law and order

G. Anand
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The Union Home Ministry on Friday ordered the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) to provide Z-plus category security for Kerala Governor Arif Mohammed Khan, barely two hours after he accused the State police of going slack on his security at Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan's instance.

Matters came to a head early in the day with Mr. Khan came out of his car to confront protesters of the Students Federation of India (SFI) – the ruling CPI (M)'s student wing – who waved black flags as the VIP motorcade swept past them at Nilamel in the Kollam district around 11 a.m.

The SFI has been on a war path against the Governor as Chancellor of State-funded universities, accusing him of stacking the senates with Sangh Parivar nominees.

Open tussle: Kerala Governor Arif Mohammed Khan sitting in protest in Kollam on Saturday against SFI activists (top), who waved black flags at him. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT & ANI

Mr. Khan rebuffed a desperate attempt by the State Police Chief to mollify him on the phone and said he would not budge from the spot unless the police furnished him with a copy of the FIR. He said he would send the document to the Home Ministry. Mr. Khan left the scene by 12.30 p.m.

The day's developments resonated across Kerala's social and political spectrum. For one, it acrimoniously divided the polity into government versus the Governor lines.

Left Democratic Front (LDF) convener E.P. Jayarajan called Mr. Khan a disgrace to the high political office. He demanded that the Centre recall Mr. Khan.

Leader of the Opposition and Congress leader V.D. Satheesan slammed the government for abetting protests against Mr. Khan, while using the police and CPI(M) workers to stifle the Opposition's dissenting voices against Mr. Vijayan's corrupt and authoritarian regime.

Street theatre: SFI

SFI State president P.M. Arsho said Mr. Khan's "street theatre" would not dampen the organisation's resolve to insulate State-funded universities from infiltration by Sangh Parivar elements.

Union Minister of State V. Muraleedharan said the attacks against the Governor signalled a collapse of law and order in the State. He said Mr. Vijayan was playing with fire by attempting to endanger Mr. Khan.

Caste census will be taken up soon in Telangana, says Revanth

The Hindu Bureau
HYDERABAD

Telangana Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy said that caste census will be taken up in the State soon.

He said that his government is committed to this decision as per the promise given to the people before the election. He has also directed officials to take necessary steps for caste enumeration.

The Chief Minister conducted a review of BC, Minority and Tribal Welfare Departments at the Secretariat here on Saturday.

Addressing the meeting, he asked them to provide complete details regarding Gurukul schools functioning from rented premises and told them to prepare proposals to construct buildings on a war footing. The budget proposals should carry the estimates of construction of residential schools, he said.

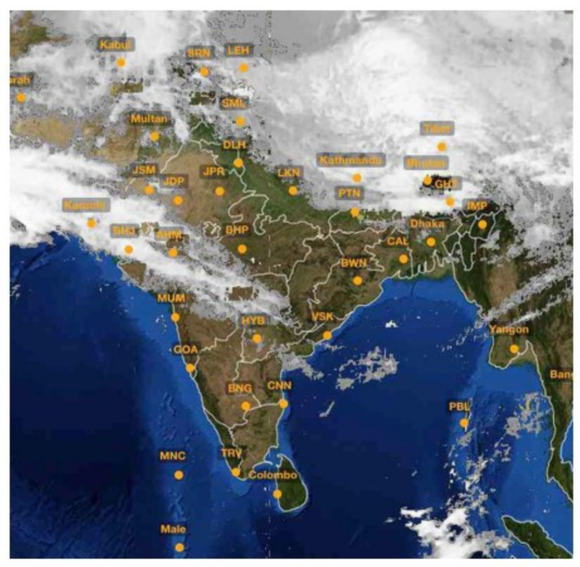
'No pending bills'

The Chief Minister also directed the officials to ensure that there were no pending bills pertaining to food and cooking bills in government hostels and residential schools.

He suggested that corporates be roped in for the construction of education hubs using corporate social responsibility (CSR) funds and donations from philanthropists. He also suggested that CSR funds be collected and used for infrastructure in government hostels.

WEATHERWATCH

Rainfall, temperature & air quality in select metros yesterday



TEMPERATURE DATA: IMD, POLLUTION DATA: CPCB, MAP: INSAT/IMD (TAKEN AT 18.00 HRS)

Forecast for Sunday: Heavy rainfall/snowfall likely at isolated places over Jammu & Kashmir, Ladakh and Muzaffarabad. Dense/very dense fog likely in some/isolated pockets over Punjab, Haryana, west Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Bihar, Assam, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram, Tripura, Sikkim and Madhya Pradesh

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	—	24.5	11.3	Kozhikode	—	34.9	24.0
Ahmedabad	—	30.3	14.0	Kurnool	—	33.5	20.7
Aizawl	—	22.8	10.5	Lucknow	—	20.5	5.9
Allahabad	—	23.6	6.7	Madurai	—	33.7	20.7
Bengaluru	—	28.7	16.2	Mangaluru	—	33.2	21.9
Bhopal	—	25.8	10.4	Mumbai	—	34.3	18.1
Bhubaneswar	—	27.6	14.4	Mysuru	—	30.0	17.0
Chandigarh	—	23.5	7.7	New Delhi	—	24.0	4.3
Chennai	—	30.7	23.7	Patna	—	21.5	8.5
Coimbatore	—	30.4	20.8	Port Blair	90	29.4	24.3
Dehradun	—	22.1	5.4	Puducherry	—	30.7	23.1
Gangtok	4	12.0	3.9	Pune	—	30.5	15.3
Goa	—	34.0	21.8	Raipur	—	27.0	12.8
Guwahati	—	23.8	10.5	Ranchi	—	24.2	9.9
Hubballi	—	32.0	16.0	Shillong	—	14.0	4.0
Hyderabad	—	28.9	20.2	Shimla	—	17.5	6.6
Imphal	—	22.4	7.2	Srinagar	—	13.3	-2.3
Jaipur	—	25.1	9.6	Thiruvananthapuram	—	32.0	23.2
Kochi	—	32.4	23.8	Tiruchi	—	32.5	22.0
Kohima	—	13.5	4.5	Vijayawada	—	30.3	22.0
Kolkata	—	24.2	12.6	Visakhapatnam	—	28.7	22.4

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

Pollutants in the air you are breathing

CITIES	SO_2	NO_2	CO	PM2.5	PM10	CODE
Ahmedabad	9	12	28	192	129	
Bengaluru	4	31	48	71	106	
Chennai	1	33	63	310	194	
Delhi	12	224	54	377	352	
Hyderabad	2	34	56	83	81	
Kolkata	16	91	22	241	153	
Lucknow	9	65	105	289	261	
Mumbai	—	26	52	272	234	
Pune	115	163	111	143	124	
Visakhapatnam	14	37	52	166	123	

Yesterday

In observation made at 4.00 p.m., Bhagalpur, Bihar recorded an overall air quality index (AQI) score of 380 indicating an unhealthy level of pollution. In contrast, Bihar Sharif, Bihar recorded a healthy AQI score of 35

Air Quality Code: Poor Moderate Good (Readings indicate average AQI)

SO_2: Sulphur Dioxide. Short-term exposure can harm the respiratory system, making breathing difficult. It can affect visibility by reacting with other air particles to form haze and stain culturally important objects such as statues and monuments.

NO_2: Nitrogen Dioxide. Aggravates respiratory illness, causes haze to form by reacting with other air particles, causes acid rain, pollutes coastal waters.

CO: Carbon monoxide. High concentration in air reduces oxygen supply to critical organs like the heart and brain. At very high levels, it can cause dizziness, confusion, unconsciousness and even death.

PM2.5 & PM10: Particulate matter pollution can cause irritation of the eyes, nose and throat, coughing, chest tightness and shortness of breath, reduced lung function, irregular heartbeat, asthma attacks, heart attacks and premature death in people with heart or lung disease

NDA embarks on State-wide padayatra in Kerala

The Hindu Bureau
KASARAGOD

Goa Chief Minister Pramod Sawant on Saturday expressed concern over the security situation in Kerala, stating that even the Governor was not safe in the State.

Speaking at the inauguration of the National Democractic Alliance (NDA)'s 'Kerala Padayatra' led by Bharatiya Janata Party State president K. Surendran in Kasaragod on Saturday, Mr. Sawant highlighted the Centre's intervention to ensure the safety of the Governor.

He said the Central government took the unprecedented step of providing security to the Governor owing to Kerala's inability to ensure a safe environment.

Mr. Sawant said the NDA rally will be a transformative journey for Kerala.

Corruption charges

Reflecting on the achievements of the Modi government over the past decade, he said the people's desire for BJP representation in Kerala stemmed from the party's commitment to a corruption-free administration. He said the Chief Minister's Office in Kerala was facing corruption charges.

Highlighting the strides in infrastructure development under the BJP government, Mr. Sawant said the commitment to development was not mere rhetoric but evident in various sectors such as drinking water, sanitation, and women empowerment.

He praised the implementation of the gratuity scheme for the common people and credited the Centre with numerous initiatives in agriculture and poverty alleviation. Mr. Sawant said the lack of opportunities for students in Kerala forced many to seek opportunities outside the State.

NDA State convener Tushar Vellappally made the welcome address.

Student stripped for not attending Ambedkar puja

The Hindu Bureau
KALABURAGI

The 19-year-old victim belongs to the Lambani community and the assailants are students. They are said to have abused, assaulted and paraded him semi-naked

Two days after Kalaburagi was hit by spontaneous protests condemning the desecration of an Ambedkar statue, a pre-university student who refused to attend a weekly puja of Ambedkar for his personal reasons was assaulted and paraded semi-nude in Kalaburagi on Thursday.

The 19-year old victim, a science student at N.V. College and a resident of government-run post-matriculation hostel behind the High Court complex in the city, belongs to Lambani community and the assailants are students.

As per a complaint lodged by Neelakanth Rathod, the father of the boy, some of the students had, late on Wednesday, asked the hostellers to attend the weekly Ambedkar puja.

The complainant's son expressed his inability to attend the programme due to other work. This enraged the students with some more from nearby colleges too questioning him. They are said to have abused, assaulted and stripped the boy and paraded him semi-naked on the streets.

The students ran away leaving the boy behind after seeing the policemen deployed near the High Court.

The video of the boy, holding an Ambedkar portrait, being paraded half-naked, went viral later.

Coming to know of the incident, the victim's father, who was at his native place Patwad tanda in Kamalapur taluk when the incident happened, rushed to Kalaburagi and lodged the complaint with Ashok Nagar Police.

Later, a First Information Report was registered under Sections 341, 323, 504, 505(2), 506 and 149 of Indian Penal Code.

I have the highest regard for Gandhi, says T.N. Governor

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

Governor R.N. Ravi on Saturday denied that he had disrespected Mahatma Gandhi and said he had the highest regard for him, and his teaching were the ideals of his life.

A section of the media had sought to create an erroneous impression that he was disrespectful towards the Father of the Nation, he said.

In a statement, Mr. Ravi said some media houses cherry-picked from his speech at the 127th birth anniversary of freedom fighter Subhas Chandra Bose on January 23 and twisted it.

R.N. Ravi

To elaborate on Netaji's significant contributions to India's independence that were not adequately appreciated, he had then said the revolts of the Royal Indian Navy and Air Force in February 1946, inspired by Netaji, had accelerated the process of independence.

Clarifying the points he had made, the Governor said the British had declared that they would leave India in March 1946 as they panicked that they could not trust Indians in uniform.

The Quit India Movement of August 1942 lost steam after the initial success.

Internecine conflicts in the freedom movement kept much of the efforts of the Congress leaders focused on managing them. "The British could have ruled India for some more years but for Netaji's armed revolution and its domino effect on the Indian military and security forces. What I have said are facts based on primary documents," he said.

PUBLIC NOTICE

The General Public hereby notified that my clients **Mrs. L. Shakuntala wife Mr. Sampath Kumar K & Mr. K. Sampath Kumar** both residing at No.899, 4th Cross, 16th Main, BTM 2nd Stage, Bangalore-560076 are the absolute owners and are in peaceful possession and enjoyment of the Property mentioned below in the Schedule. They have lost/misplaced the Original Rectification Deed dated 14-12-2005, registered as document No.KEN-1-19006-2005-06, stored in CD No.KEND244, registered in the office of the Senior Sub-registrar, Kengeri, and Bangalore pertaining to the Schedule Property. In this connection, an E-Complaint has also been lodged on 27-01-2024 vide Lost Report No. 0905489/2024. I hereby call upon the General public if anyone is in custody or possession of the same or otherwise found the above said document, kindly handover to undersigned immediately/within **7 days** and they may be suitably awarded and also I further bring into the notice of the general public that in case anyone dealing with the Schedule Property on the basis of the above said original document, it shall not be binding on my clients and the same will be an offence and they are liable to punish under the Criminal and Civil Law.

SCHEDULE PROPERTY

All that piece and parcel of House built on **Site bearing No.89,** formed in Converted Sy. Nos.34/1, 35/1, 39/1 & 41, duly converted by the Deputy Commissioner, Bangalore District, Bangalore, vide Conversion Order No. B.DIS ALN(S)SR(K.T) 136/2003-04, Dated 28-04-2004, Rajarajeshwari CMC Katha No.34/1/89, as per Tax BBMP paid Receipt Property No.34/1,35/1,39/1 & 41/89 situated at **Mylasandra Village, Kengeri Hobli, Bangalore South Taluk,** BBMP Ward No.198 of Hemmigepura, measuring East to West 40.0 feet, North to South 30-0 feet, totally measuring **1200 Square feet**, and bounded on:

East by : Road; West by : Site No. 102; North by : Site No.90; South by : Site No.88.

KRISHNAMURTHY. P, Advocate
No.11, 1st Floor, "MEERA NIVAS"
Opp: Sai Baba Temple, North Park Road,
Seshadripuram, Bangalore-500 020.
Contact : 9740718436

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to bring to the NOTICE of the General Public, that **Shri. Gopalakrishna S.,** aged about 55 years s/o. Late. Siddananjappa and **Smt. Sudha V.,** aged about 45 years w/o. Gopalakrishna S both are R/at No. 36, 2nd Cross, 1st Main Road, HMT Layout, Nelagadarahalli, Nagasandra Post, Bangalore – 560 073 are the full and absolute owners of the property No. 4/7/28 situated at **Doddabiddarakallu Village, Yeshwanthpur, Hobli, Bangalore North,** which is morefully described in the schedule below, having purchased from previous/owner/s/Jayamma and other, under Sale Deed dated 01/02/2023 registered as Document No. PNY-1-07304/2022-23 of Book - I stored in C.D No. PNYD 1742 in the office of the Sub-Registrar, Peenya, Bangalore. It is further notified to the General Public that the earlier owner/M.V. Shivakumar having acquired the schedule property under Sale Deed dated 05/09/2001 executed by K.T. Shylaja Rani in his favour registered as Document No. 8054/2001-02 of Book – I stored in C.D. No. 47 in the office of the Senior Sub-Registrar, Bangalore North Taluk was lost. A Police complaint in this regard is also lodged with Jurisdictional Police, Bangalore vide Lost Report No. 0885205/2024 dated 11/01/2024. It is hereby requested that if any person/s comes across or finds the same, he/she/they are requested to hand over the same to the below mentioned address and they will be compensated accordingly.

The General Public is hereby further cautioned that if anybody deals with the Schedule Property with any person/s based on the misplaced/lost document mentioned above, it is at their own risk and cost and such person/s will not derive any title over the Schedule Property and in such an event they have no claim of whatsoever nature against **Gopalakrishna S and Sudha V.,** nor the Schedule Property.

SCHEDULE PROPERTY

ALL THAT PIECE AND PARCEL of the immovable property **No. 4/7/28** Kaneshumari No. 4/7/28, Assessment No. 7/3 and Khatha No. 4/6 situated in **Doddabidarakallu, Village, Yeshwanthpur Hobli, Bangalore North Taluk,** presently within the limits of BBMP Ward No. 40, measuring East to West 30 feet, North to South 40 feet in all **1200 square feet** comprising of A.C. Sheet with red oxide, Doors and Windows are with sal woods, with all amenities & bounded on:-

East by : Property bearing No. 29; West by : Property bearing No. 27; North by : Property bearing No. 2 & 3 &; South by : Road:

Shri. G.N. HARISH, Advocate,
312, Ground Floor, 21st 'A' Cross,
VI Block, Jayanagar, BANGALORE - 560 082.

EDUCATION HUB — A Business Initiative

Advanced Training and Learning Faculty Development Programme at Nitte Meenakshi Institute of Technology

'It is the need of the hour to focus on Quantum Machine Learning and convergence of Quantum Computing with Artificial Intelligence', opined Dr. H.C. Nagaraj, Principal, NMIT while inaugurating Advanced Training and Learning Faculty Development Programme arranged as part of ATAL FDP initiative focusing on Quantum Machine Learning and AI. Technocrats, researchers and teachers across Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Goa and other regions participated in this unique week-long programme conducted by the departments of Artificial Intelligence & Machine Learning and Electrical & Electronics Engineering of NMIT. Experts from renowned organizations including BosonQ psi, Mathworks, Jawaharlal Nehru Centre for Advanced Scientific Research (JNCSR) and Quantum Programming and QPiAI contributed their insights. Their valuable contributions enriched the program, providing participants with a unique blend of theoretical depth and practical applications at the cutting edge of Quantum Computing and AI. Dr. Piyush Kumar Pareek, Head, Department of AIML and other faculty members were present on the occasion.

Kristu Jayanthi College hosted a Two-day International Conference, titled "Health and Humanities: Exploring Uncharted Terrains in Literary Paradigms"

The Department of English at KJC,in collaboration with Bryant University,Rhode Island, USA, and Bangalore Baptist Hospital, hosted Two-day International Conference, titled "Health and Humanities: Exploring Uncharted Terrains in Literary Paradigms". Delivering the presidential address, Fr. Dr. Augustine George, Principal, KJC, highlighted the relevance of humanities in the narratives of health, healing and well-being. Dr. R. Spurgeon, Director & CEO at Bangalore Baptist Hospital, delivered the inaugural address on "Building Empathy in Healthcare: Lessons from the Humanities". His speech emphasized the importance of empathy that creates positive impact in healthcare. The event also marked the conference book release by Dr. Deepthiman Gowda, Director of Clinical Practice at Columbia Narrative Medicine and Assistant Dean for Medical Education at Kaiser Permanente Bernard J. Tyson, US along with the other dignitaries. The inaugural session also witnessed a felicitation address given by Dr. Veronica McCOMB, Academic Dean of Bryant University, Rhode Island, USA

The week long faculty development program on "Synthetic Biology and Biomimetic Applications" at Sir M Visvesvaraya Institute of Technology Campus

The Departments of Biotechnology and Mechanical Engineering, Sir MVIT, with the kind support from AICTE and Sri Krishnadevaraya Educational Trust (Sri KET), organized a week - long Faculty Development Program (FDP) on "Synthetic Biology and Biomimetic Applications" at Sir MVIT campus, Bengaluru. The program was given a bright start by Dr. H.G. Nagendra, Professor & Head, Dept. of BT, Sir MVIT, and Programme Coordinator who elaborated on the schedule of the event and highlighted the immense opportunities in diverse domains of "Synthetic Biology and Biomimetic Applications". Dr. S. G. Rakesh, Principal Sir MVIT and Chairperson of the organizing committee, welcomed the gathering and urged the faculty to constantly up skill themselves for better progression. Dr. B. E. Rangaswami, Registrar of VTU was the chief guest and Dr. H. S. Subramanya, Director of IBAB was guest of honor. Dr. A. C. Chandrashekar Raju, President, Sri KET presided over the inaugural function. The programme also graced by office bearers of Sri KET. The 6-day FDP featured 17 interactive lectures, site visit and 4 hands-on labs on diverse aspects of synthetic biology and biomimetics.

Andrew Additive is a 3D tech startup incubated inside Cambridge Institute of Technology in Bengaluru

Started in 2022 the company focuses on developing 3D printers for the Indian market. The company has indigenously developed an industrial SLS printer fully made in India and is launching this printer in IMTEX 2024. "It is really a proud moment for me to put India into the global SLS market. My aim is to ensure that every industry, design office and academia in India should have 3D printing in their facility" says Nikhil Andrew, Founder of Andrew Additive. The SLS polymer printer is named KALAM PI30 as a tribute to Dr. Kalam who had been an inspiration to many engineers and scientists in India. KALAM PI30 can print parts in engineering plastics and rubber materials. The system was formally inaugurated at IMTEX by Dr. Jyothish Kumar, President - Additive Manufacturing Society of India and Dr. Kavya K, Founder Chairwoman - Indian Women in 3D Printing. For more information visit www.andrewadditive.com.

Dr. Ambedkar Institute of Technology inaugurated International Multi-Conference

Hon'ble Minister of IT and BT Sri. Priyank M Kharge augurated the Advances in Information Technology, communication, and Energy Systems (AITCS InES-2024) International Multi-Conference organized by Dr. Ambedkar Institute of Technology. Minister emphasized Karnataka's position as a pioneering state in the IT Sector and briefed that the state consistently leads in the IT domain, harnessing the talent pool graduating from universities and engineering colleges. And also he acknowledged the state's commitment to providing support and infrastructure for establishing new IT-based Industries. Additionally, Karnataka-based companies actively engage in research and development activities in the IT sector to address future challenges and evolving technology landscapes, the state government has established the high-skill advisory committee, a pioneering initiative in the country. The AITCES-2024 conference featured notable speakers from prestigious foreign universities and this event was presided over by the Chairman of PVPWT Sri. S Mariswamy, Secretary Sri. S Shivamallu and other Trustees Sri A. R Krishnamurthy & Dr. B N Umesh and Senior Research Advisor Prof. LM Patnaik, Mentor Prof. N C Shivprakash and Principal Dr. C. Nanjundaswamy & Vice-Principal Dr. Siddaraju were part of this event.

From Page One

BJP weighs its options in Bihar as MLAs meet

The first meeting of senior State BJP leaders was held at a hotel in Patna while the second meeting of party leaders and legislators was held at the State party headquarters on Beerchand Patel road in Patna. The second meeting went on for over two hours while, the first one got over in an hour.

Meanwhile, Hindustani Awam Morcha (Secular) leader Jitan Ram Manjhi, after meeting four of his party legislators, asserted he would remain with Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Earlier in the day, it was said RJD chief Lalu Prasad and later, top Congress leaders from Delhi too have spoken to Mr. Manjhi soliciting his support for *Mahagathbandhan*.

India, France agree on surveillance ties

The two leaders expressed satisfaction with the increasing "complexity and interoperability" of India-France joint defence exercises across air, sea and land and agreed to consider a distinct joint tri-services exercise, it stated. "They also discussed actively increasing capacities, particularly in the maritime domain, by joining hands with other like-minded countries."

Pillar of partnership

The statement termed the defence and security partnership as a principal pillar of the partnership and stated that it extends from "intelligence and information exchange to exercises and equipment and across all domains from the seabed to space".

India carries out triservice exercise with the U.S. and Russia. In addition, the two countries have also committed to "revitalising" the trilateral cooperation with Australia, deepening the one with United Arab Emirates and exploring new ones in the region.

There has been a series of minilaterals in the last few years and officials have stated that several requests for trilaterals and multilaterals are pending. In July 2023, India and France finalised the comprehensive road map for the Indo-Pacific.

On defence industrial cooperation, for which a road map has been adopted, Mr. Modi and Mr. Macron reiterated their commitment to further deepening the integration between the two countries' respective defence industrial sectors.

'SP-Congress alliance off to good start in U.P.'

"Our cordial alliance with the Congress is off to a good start with 11 strong seats. This trend will move forward with the winning equation. 'INDIA' team and 'PDA' (Picchda, Dalit, Alpsankhyak) strategy will change history," Mr. Yadav said in a post on X.

"We have offered 11 seats to them [the Congress], so that there is a respectable mutual coordination among us, and we can defeat the BJP," chief spokesperson of the SP Rajendra Chaudhary said. "The SP will contest 62 seats in the Lok Sabha election," Mr. Chaudhary added.

At a press conference in Delhi, Congress communications chief Jairam Ramesh responded to Mr. Yadav's tweet and said talks are still going on.

"Talks are going on in a very positive and good environment, and soon a strong result will come," Mr. Ramesh said., adding, "We will inform you once a formula is finalised."

U.P. Congress president Ajay Rai, who is said to be demanding close to 20 seats, said that the final decision on seat-sharing will be taken by the party high command.

In the current Lok Sabha, the SP, which had fought in alliance with the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) in 2019, has three MPs while BSP has 10 MPs. Sonia Gandhi, who represents the Rae Bareli seat, is the lone Congress MP from the State.

SC issues notice in Calcutta HC judges' spat

Attorney General R. Venkataramani and Solicitor General Tushar Mehta have questioned the procedure followed by the High Court Division Bench headed by Justice Soumen Sen to stay Justice Gangopadhyay's directions without even perusing a copy of the latter's judicial order, records of the case or the memorandum of appeal.

"I [the Centre] is more concerned about the procedure of passing a stay order without seeing the appeal memo or order," Mr. Mehta said.

"Sometimes, there are exceptional circumstances..." Chief Justice Chandrachud replied.

"How the Single Judge Bench [Justice Gangopadhyay] had passed the orders is also a matter of contention," senior advocate Kapil Sibal and advocate Astha Sharma, for the West Bengal government, intervened.

Justice Gangopadhyay had made personal comments in his judicial order against Justice Sen. He had accused Justice Sen of using his office to "act" in favour of the ruling dispensation in West Bengal.

The Supreme Court took *suo motu* cognisance of the spat on Friday and convened the sitting of its five senior-most judges comprising, besides the Chief Justice, Justices Sanjiv Khanna, B.R. Gavai, Surya Kant, and Aniruddha Bose, on Saturday.

Hand over Gyanvapi site, VHP asks mosque panel

Anjum Intezamia Masjid Committee should shift the mosque to another place, says VHP working president Alok Kumar; Hindus should be permitted to offer *seva puja* to *'Shivling'*, he says

Ishita Mishra
NEW DELHI

Survey impact: A team of the ASI during scientific survey at the Gyanvapi mosque. FILE PHOTO

The Anjum Intezamia Masjid Committee, which looks after the management of the Gyanvapi mosque in Varanasi, should agree to "respectfully" shift the mosque to another appropriate place and hand over the original site of "Kashi Vishvanatha" to the Hindu community, Alok Kumar, international working president of the Vishva Hindu Parishad (VHP), said on Saturday.

"The ASI, an official and expert body, has submitted its report to the District Judge hearing the Gyanvapi matter in Varanasi. The evidence collected by the ASI from the Gyanvapi structure reconfirms that the mosque had been constructed after demolishing a magnificent temple," Mr. Kumar said.

The VHP is affiliated to the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh and was at the forefront of the Ram Janmabhoomi movement.

Mr. Kumar said that the discovery of a *Shivling* inside the *Wazukhana* (area for ablutions) left no doubt that the structure did not have the character of a mosque. The Muslim side has claimed that it was part of the fountain.

The discovery of names such as Janardana, Rudra, and Umeswara in inscriptions found in the structure were telltale evidence that it was a temple, he said.

"The evidence collected and the conclusions provided by the ASI do prove that the religious character of this place of worship existed on the 15th day of August, 1947, and as at present is of a Hindu temple. Thus, even as per Section 4 of the Places of Worship Act, 1991, the structure should be declared as a Hindu temple." Mr. Kumar said.

The VHP also demanded that Hindus should be permitted to offer *seva puja* to the *Shivling*. The organisation said it believed that this righteous action should be an important step towards creating amicable relations between the two prominent communities of India.

ASI report

The ASI, in its report, said that the western wall of the Gyanvapi mosque was the remaining part of a huge Hindu temple.

The report said that parts of the pre-existing temple, including pillars and pilasters, were reused with modifications to extend the span of the mosque and in the construction of the *sahan* (courtyard).

The report said that Arabic-Persian inscription found inside a room in the mosque mentioned that the mosque was built in the 20th regnal year of Aurangzeb (1676-77).

Hence, the pre-existing structure appeared to have been destroyed in the 17th century, during the reign of Aurangzeb, and part of it was modified and reused in the existing structure, it said.

"Based on scientific studies/survey carried out, it can be said that there existed a Hindu temple prior to the construction of the existing structure," the ASI added.

The ASI had done the survey using ground-penetrating radar (GPR) technology on the orders of Varanasi district court.

The Allahabad High Court and the Supreme Court also uphold the order to conduct the ASI survey of the mosque. The top court, however, asked the ASI not to touch the *Wazukhana* area of the mosque.

Gyanvapi case raises a challenge to Places of Worship Act, 1991

Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

Some answers may be found in the Ramjanmabhoomi title dispute judgment of 2019

Calls to hand over the Gyanvapi mosque to the Hindus have come even after appeals by the Anjuman Intazamia Masjid in the Supreme Court to protect the Places of Worship (Special Provisions) Act of 1991 from becoming a dead letter.

The 1991 Act provides a guarantee for the preservation of the religious character of places of public worship as they existed on August 15, 1947.

In August 2023, the Anjuman, Gynavapi mosque's managers, had argued in the apex court that the demand for a "scientific investigation" by the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) of the mosque premises was merely "salami tactics" and would defeat the spirit of the 1991 Act. But a Bench headed by Chief Justice of India D.Y. Chandrachud had allowed the ASI survey using "non-invasive technology".

The August 2023 judgment of the apex court did not directly deal with the mosque committee's two questions – "what is the point of ordering this ASI survey and going into the history of what may have happened 500 years ago" and "Is the survey itself not a violation of the statement of objects of the Places of Worship Act?"

Incidentally, the answer to these questions may be found in the Ramjanmabhoomi title dispute judgment authored by a five-judge Bench of the Supreme Court in November 2019. The Constitution Bench in the Ramjanmabhoomi verdict observed that the 1991 Act was an "affirmation" of the solemn duty of the state to preserve the equality of all faiths. The Act was a manifestation of an essential constitutional value.

The judgment had highlighted the parliamentary intention behind the 1991 Act. It had reproduced excerpts of the government arguing in Lok Sabha on September 10, 1991 that the Places of Worship Act "which sought to prohibit the forcible conversion of places of worship was not to create new disputes and to rake up old controversies which had long been forgotten by the people."

The five-judge Bench referred to how one of the parliamentarians, Malini Bhattacharya, had agreed with the cut-off date of August 15, 1947. "It is because on that date we are supposed to have emerged as a modern, democratic and sovereign State... From that date, we also distinguished ourselves as a state which has no official religion and which gives equal rights to all the different religious denominations".

Navy team helps bring fire under control on oil tanker hit by Houthi missile in Gulf of Aden

Dinakar Peri
NEW DELHI

Crisis at sea: Smoke billowing from *MV Merlin Luanda* in the Gulf of Aden in the Arabian Sea on Saturday. INDIANNAVY/X

A British oil tanker, *m.v. Marlin Luanda*, was hit by an anti-ship ballistic missile launched by the Iran-backed Houthi militants in the Gulf of Aden on Friday night, the U.S. Central Command said.

The Indian Navy said it deployed a team from its guided missile destroyer *INS Visakhapatnam* following a distress call to to augment the fire-fighting efforts on board the oil tanker, owned by London-based commodities group Trafigura.

Based on a request from the master, a fire-fighting team from *INS Visakhapatnam* comprising 10 Indian naval personnel with specialist fire-fighting equipment embarked on *m.v Marlin Luanda* in the early hours of Saturday, the Indian Navy said.

"After six hours of battling the fire along with crew of *m.v. Marlin Luanda*, the Indian fire-fighting team has successfully brought the fire under control," it stated

The tanker has 22 Indians and one Bangladeshi among crew members and was sailing from Laconian Gulf in Greece to Singapore with Russian naphtha, when it sounded a distress call following the attack.

A U.S. warship and a French warship also responded to the distress call but only the Indian Navy sent a fire- fighting team on board the vessel. "The team is currently monitoring the situation to rule out any possibility of re-ignition," the Indian Navy added. The Navy currently has around 12 warships deployed in the Arabian Sea close to the Gulf of Aden for anti-piracy and maritime security operations.

The Iran-backed group has been targeting merchant vessels on the key global trade route, which they say is in response to the Israeli offensive against Hamas in Gaza. Claiming responsibility for the attack, the Houthis said in a statement that they used "appropriate naval missiles; the strike was direct."

U.S. STRIKES HOUTHIS
» WORLD PAGE

'Digi Yatra registration should be voluntary'

Jagriti Chandra
NEW DELHI

Airports have been advised to ensure that registration of air travellers for the Digi Yatra initiative, which provides digital processing of passengers at various checkpoints with the help of a face scan, is "completely voluntary", Minister for Civil Aviation Jyotiraditya Scindia wrote in response to a letter from Trinamool Congress MP Saket Gokhale following complaints from passengers.

"The issue raised by you has been examined and airport operators have been advised to sensitise Digi buddies on consent taking process and keeping use of Digi Yatra completely voluntary," Mr. Scindia said in his letter on January 24. Digi buddies are staff hired by airports to assist passengers to enrol for Digi Yatra.

Mr. Gokhale wrote to Mr. Scindia after receiving several complaints from air travellers that their "biometrics were being taken without their consent". *The Hindu* also reported on January 5 about widespread concern among passengers that their facial biometrics were being recorded by airport staff in a "coercive and deceptive" manner without their consent or knowledge.

The Minister also explained that consent of passengers was a prerequisite for recording facial biometric data at the time of registration. He reiterated that the data is purged from the airport systems within 24 hours of flight departure. The Digi Yatra initiative involves a mobile app where passengers can use their face as a boarding pass.

JSW Paints and *The Hindu Young World* to hold painting competition for students

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

JSW Paints 'Futurescapes' Painting Competition, 2024 will be hosted in association with *The Hindu Young World* for school students. The last date for receipt of entries for the preliminary round is February 27.

With the theme "Think Beautiful", the painting competition will have preliminary, regional, and national final rounds.

It will be held in three categories – sub-junior (Class 3-5), junior (Class 6-8), and senior (Class 9-12).

While the theme for the sub-junior category would be 'A day at the zoo', 'Underwater dreamland', and 'My happy family', students in the junior category may paint with the themes – 'A day in the theme park', 'Animal Olympics' and 'Sharing a rainbow.'

The themes for senior students are 'Journey to outer space', 'A zero-pollution world' and 'Unity in diversity'.

The instructions

Students may use water colours, crayons and colour pencils to paint on an A3 white drawing sheet of size 11.7x16.5 inches. However, sketch pens and markers can be used for outline only. The participants must write details, including topic, name, class, school name with branch, city, State, category of participation, parent's name, e-mail ID and mobile number to qualify for next round.

The physical drawing must be sent to the nearest office of *The Hindu* and each participant can submit one entry mentioning 'Young World - JSW Futurescapes Painting Competition 2024.'

Participants who qualify for the next round would be intimated through mail and mobile number.

For details, log on to ywc.thehindu.com/jswpaints or contact The Hindu Group Customer Care at 1800 102 between 7 a.m. and 7 p.m.

You are architect of developed India, says PM to youth

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday highlighted a host of measures taken by his government to assert that it has empowered the youth and women and that a developed India will fulfil their dreams. "You are the architect of a developed India," he told youngsters at the annual NCC-PM rally here.

Women were earlier confined to cultural programmes but his government has opened up various sectors, including all three services, to them and they are making a mark everywhere, he said, noting that the Republic Day parade this year was dedicated to them.

The number of women in central security forces has doubled in the last 10 years, Mr. Modi said and added that States are also being encouraged to follow a similar path.

Digital revolution

A digital revolution has been taking place and it benefits the creativity of the youth the most, he said.

People were struggling for 2G and 3G infrastructure a decade ago while 5G and optical fibre networks are now reaching every village, Mr. Modi said.A worthy government takes decision in the present, keeping in mind future possibilities, and has its priorities clear, he said.

The biggest beneficiary of his government's efforts will be not him, but the youth studying now in schools and colleges, Mr. Modi asserted.

Our final stand will be clear in a few days: Chirag

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Lok Janshakti Party (Ramvilas) president Chirag Paswan met BJP president J.P. Nadda and Home Minister Amit Shah on Saturday, to seek assurance that his presence in the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) in Bihar will not be diminished by the return of Bihar Chief Minister and JD(U) president Nitish Kumar.

The LJP, before the split between Mr. Paswan and his uncle Pashupati Nath Paras, had contested six seats in the 2019 Lok Sabha polls. Mr. Paswan insists that his faction should be given six seats, including Hajipur that his father had held eight times.

Speaking to presspersons, Mr. Paswan said that his party will take a "final stand" only after Mr. Kumar makes the formal announcement. Mr. Kumar is still a part of the *Mahagatbandhan* along with the RJD, Congress and CPI (ML), and he is part of the NDA. However, Mr. Paswan said that the "speculation" doing the rounds seems to be correct.

RJD exudes confidence, leaders say 'game is not over yet' in Bihar

Lalu Prasad asks party MLAs not to lose hope and not to reveal its strategy till Nitish makes his next move; Tejashwi asks legislators not to issue provocative statements because RJD should not be seen as responsible for breaking ties with JD(U)

Amit Bhelari
PATNA

Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) legislators on Saturday authorised party chief Lalu Prasad to take a final call amid the buzz that the Janata Dal (United), led by Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, may ditch its *Mahagatbandhan* partners and form a government with its former ally, Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).

RJD sources said Mr. Prasad had asked the MLAs not to lose hope as the "game is not over yet". He told them not to reveal the party's strategy till "Mr. Kumar makes his next move".

The RJD's over two-hour-long meeting was held at the official residence of Deputy Chief Minister Tejashwi Yadav, the son of Mr. Prasad, who was present.

The *Mahagatbandhan* is a coalition of various parties, including the RJD, Congress and the Left, and had formed the government after the JD(U) snapped its ties with the BJP last year.

RJD supporters gather outside party leader and Bihar Deputy CM Tejashwi Yadav's residence, in Patna on Saturday. PTI

Calling the shots

At the meeting, the Deputy Chief Minister said Mr. Kumar was not controlling everything and people around him were the ones who were calling the shots. He, however, said Mr. Kumar would remain a "respectable person" for him.

Several RJD MLAs slammed Mr. Kumar by calling him an "opportunist". However, Mr. Yadav asked them not to issue such statements to the media because the "message should not get out to the public that the RJD is responsible for the breaking of ties with the JD(U)".

Meanwhile, JD(U) MLC Neeraj Kumar accused the RJD of corruption.

"The leadership of RJD is restless because the party has the habit of taking land in return for jobs. However, with the leadership of Nitish Kumar*ji*, around 2.15 lakh jobs were given and the RJD could not extort money in the appointment and posting of teachers," he said.

Now, all eyes are set on the Sunday's legislature party meeting of the JD(U), which will be held at the official residence of the Chief Minister at 10 a.m.

The BJP also convened its legislature party meeting at its headquarters here, which lasted for three hours.

The BJP also convened its core committee meeting. However, party leaders refused to share details of the meeting.

The Bihar Congress postponed its legislature party meeting for Sunday. It was supposed to be held in Purnea on Saturday.

Making efforts

Meanwhile, sources said the RJD was making efforts to bring Hindustani Awam Morcha Secular (HAMS) patron and former Chief Minister, Jitan Ram Manjhi, to its fold.

Mr. Manjhi has four MLAs and supports the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). Senior BJP leader Nityanand Rai had gone to meet him on Friday, followed by a visit by State BJP president Samrat Choudhary at his official residence on Saturday.

'Big offer'

A source said the RJD chief has given Mr. Manjhi and his son Santosh Suman a "big offer" if the HAMS chief helps them wade through the political crisis.

His support may prove crucial as the *Mahagatbandhan* currently has 114 MLAs, excluding 44 MLAs of the JD(U).

At present, the RJD has 79 members in the 243-member Bihar Assembly, the Congress 19, CPI (Marxist-Leninist)12, and CPI (Marxist) and CPI two each.

If HAMS supports the *Mahagatbandhan*, then its number will go up to 118, just four short of the majority mark to form the government.

The RJD is also counting on the All India Majlis-E-Ittehadul Muslimeen (AIMIM), which has one MLA.

Kharge yet to speak to Nitish; Baghel is senior observer

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Mallikarjun Kharge

The Congress said on Saturday that party president Mallikarjun Kharge had made several attempts to reach out to Janata Dal (United) president and Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, but has not been able to speak so far, amid strong indications that the latter will rejoin the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA).

Amid the political uncertainty, Mr. Kharge appointed senior leader and former Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel as a senior observer to monitor the situation as well as coordinate the Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra, which will enter Bihar on Monday.

Addressing a press conference at the All India Congress Committee (AICC) headquarters in Delhi, Congress communications chief Jairam Ramesh insisted that the Indian National Developmental, Inclusive Alliance (INDIA) is not imploding, though he accused the BJP of attempting to cause "mini-implosions" in the bloc. He described Mr. Kumar as one of the architects of the INDIA bloc along with West Bengal Chief Minister and Trinamool Congress chief Mamata Banerjee.

But Mr. Ramesh admitted that the recent developments created "bad optics" for the Opposition bloc.

"Kharge*ji* tried to reach him [Mr. Kumar]. His office called back, but they could not speak because of their preoccupation," Mr. Ramesh told presspersons.

Evasive response

Asked about his possible exit, the Congress communications chief quoted verses from the Bhagavad Gita but evaded a direct response. His colleague, the AICC's Bihar in-charge Mohan Prakash, however, said the people of Bihar would not appreciate another switch. "My best wishes to Nitish Kumar*ji* but I want to reiterate that this time the people of Bihar probably may not consider this step appropriate," he said.

Speaking to presspersons in Karnataka's Kalaburagi, Mr. Kharge added that he did not not have authentic information about Mr. Kumar's impending resignation as Chief Minister of the JD(U)-Rashtriya Janata Dal-Congress grand alliance and return to the NDA fold.

"Let us see what will happen, our effort is to unite everyone. I have spoken with Mamata Banerjee, [RJD chief] Lalu Prasad, and [CPI(M) leader] Sitaram Yechury. If we unite, we will give a good fight, and the INDIA alliance will be a success. Those who are interested in saving democracy will stay with us," Mr. Kharge said.

Outreach to Mamata

In Delhi, Mr. Ramesh once again tried to reach out to Ms. Banerjee by reiterating how top Congress leaders including Mr. Kharge, Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi have great regard for her.

Responding to Trinamool chief's announcement that her party will fight the Lok Sabha election "alone" in West Bengal, Mr. Ramesh said "it's not final until its final", and reiterated the party's stand that the Congress would be delighted if she joined the Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra in Bengal.

Separately, Mr. Kharge also wrote to the Bengal Chief Minister to flag security concerns, and urged her government to ensure a smooth passage for the *yatra*.

Nadda appoints election heads for 23 States and Union Territories

Nistula Hebbar
NEW DELHI

Ahead of the Lok Sabha election, BJP president J.P. Nadda on Saturday appointed election in-charge for 23 States and Union Territories, with party vice-president Baijayant Panda being given the charge of Uttar Pradesh and general secretary Vinod Tawde retaining the position in Bihar.

Mr. Tawde will have Rajya Sabha member Deepak Prakash as co-in-charge. Arvind Menon will be in charge of Tamil Nadu, while in Karnataka, Radha Mohan Das Agarwal will take over from general secretary Arun Singh. National general secretary Dushyant Kumar Gautam has been given the charge of Uttarakhand.

J.P. Nadda

Former Bihar Minister and the BJP's West Bengal in-charge, Mangal Pandey, has been appointed election in-charge for the State. BJP leaders Amit Malviya and Asha Lakra will be the co-in-charge.

The BJP appointed former Uttar Pradesh Minister Shrikant Sharma election in-charge for Himachal Pradesh. Sanjay Tondon will be the co-in-charge. No appointments have been announced for Maharashtra.

Former Union Minister Prakash Javadekar has been made election in-charge for Kerala, while former Tripura Chief Minister Biplab Kumar Deb will be the Haryana in-charge.

Mahendra Singh, an MLC in Uttar Pradesh, will be election in-charge for Madhya Pradesh. Delhi BJP leader Satish Upadhyay will be the co-in-charge.

Former Gujarat Chief Minister Vijay Rupani has been appointed election in-charge for Punjab, with additional charge of Chandigarh.

Ashish Sood, has been appointed election in-charge for Goa. Gujarat MLA Purnesh Modi has been made election in-charge for Daman and Diu, with Dushyant Patel as co-in-charge. Ashok Singhal has been appointed election in-charge for Arunachal Pradesh. Y. Satya Kumar, a BJP national secretary, has been made election in-charge for Andaman and Nicobar.

BJP national general secretary Tarun Chugh, who is the party's in-charge for political affairs in Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh, has been named election in-charge for both Union Territories.

Vijaypal Singh Tomar, Rajya Sabha MP from Uttar Pradesh, has been made the in-charge for Odisha, while Chhattisgarh MLA Lata Usendi will be the co-in-charge.

The BJP's in-charge for political affairs in Puducherry, Nirmala Kumar Surana, has been given the charge of elections as well. Bihar BJP MLC Dilip Jaiswal has been appointed election in-charge for Sikkim.

BJP trying to 'buy' MLAs, says Kejriwal; party denies charge

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) chief Arvind Kejriwal on Saturday alleged that the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) was trying to poach their MLAs in Delhi by offering ₹25 crore and BJP ticket to each of them, in an attempt to topple the government.

Meanwhile, the BJP rejected the allegations, terming them "baseless", and said Mr. Kejriwal should stop "lying".

"Recently, they [BJP functionaries] have contacted our 7 MLAs of Delhi and said 'we will arrest Kejriwal after a few days. After that we will make the AAP MLAs defect. Talks have been held with 21 MLAs. You can also join. Will give [you] ₹25 crore and BJP ticket to contest the elections'," Mr. Kejriwal said in a post on X.

However, the party did not provide any proof that the BJP was trying to poach their MLAs.

Delhi BJP President Virendra Sachdeva said that Mr. Kejriwal's statement shows his "political frustration".

'Trinamool very much part of INDIA at national level'

Press Trust of India
KOLKATA

The Trinamool Congress on Saturday asserted that Mamata Banerjee has never indicated a departure from the Opposition INDIA bloc at the national level, despite recent announcements of the party's decision to contest the Lok Sabha polls in West Bengal alone. This clarification by spokesperson Kunal Ghosh comes amid the backdrop of an impasse over seat-sharing in West Bengal.

WINDOW NOTICE
THRISSUR CORPORATION
cetrichur@gmail.com, Ph. No : 0487-2422420
File No : PW2/17409/18 Dt. : 25.01.2024
E-TENDER NOTICE
E-Tender is invited from the qualified companies/firms as specified in the bid document for 61 public works through e-tender as per Government norms.
Schedule available from : 25/01/2024 04:00 PM
To : 03/02/2024 4:00 PM
Opening of tender : 03/02/2024, 05.02.2024 11:00 AM
For more details logon to etenders.kerala.gov.in, www.lsgkerala.gov.in
(Sd/-) Executive Engineer
Thrissur Corporation

Office of the Director General, Medical Health & F.W.
Danda Lakhound, Sahastradhara Road, P.O. Gujrada, Dehradun Uttarakhand
Letter No.27P/PPP/12/2022/4187 Dated 25.01.2024
Government of Uttarakhand E- tender Notice
1. Name of Work- Operationalise Mobile Tuberculosis testing Van in Uttarakhand in the Five Districts Dehradun, U.S. Nagar, Haridwar and Plain regions Nainital and Pauri.
2. Date and time of e-publishing of tender - 30/01/2024 till 14:00 PM
3. Pre Bid Meeting - 15:00 PM on 15/02/2024
4. Closing date of online submission of Tender - 26/02/2024, till 14:00 (IST)
5. Opening date of technical bid Tender - 26/02/2024, till 15:00 (IST)
6. Details of subsequent addendum/corrigendum/cancellation etc. may be obtained from the website https://uktenders.gov.in.
7. **Portal Registration:** The bidder intending to participate in the bid is Required to register in the portal using his/her active personal/ official email id as his/her Login id and attach his/her valid digital signature certificate (DSC) to his/her unique login.
Pre Bid meeting shall be held in the office of **Director General, Medical Health & Family welfare, Danda Lakhound, P.O. Gujrara, Sahastradhara road, Dehradun, Uttarakhand.**
For further queries, the bidders may contact through email- mhvuttarakhand@yahoo.com and at Room No 52, Office of the Director General, Medical Health & Family welfare, Danda Lakhound, P.O. Gujrara, Sahastradhara road, Dehradun, Uttarakhand.
Director General

VISAKHAPATNAM METROPOLITAN REGION DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
'e' Procurement Request for Proposal (RFP) Notice
VMRDA, Visakhapatnam invites Bids on "e" Procurement Platform for the following works (NIT No: 18/2023-24/CE/SE II / EE-I, VMRDA, Dt.27-01-2024, 2nd Call) Development of Nature Cottages,Revolving Restaurant and Beach View Cafe (in about 1.99 Acres) at Kailasagiri on PPP Basis. Last date : 09-02-2024, 5:00 PM.
For further details please logon to www.apeprocurement.gov.in
Sd/-Metropolitan Commissioner, VMRDA

GOVERNMENT OF TELANGANA
HIGHER EDUCATION (UE) DEPARTMENT
NOTIFICATION
Government of Telangana invites applications for the post of **Vice - Chancellor** for the State Universities mentioned below :

Sl. No	Name of the University
1.	Osmania University, Hyderabad
2.	Potti Sreeramulu Telugu University, Hyderabad
3.	Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Open University, Hyderabad
4.	Jawaharlal Nehru Technological University (JNTU), Hyderabad
5.	Kakatiya University, Warangal
6.	Mahatma Gandhi University, Nalgonda
7.	Sathavahana University, Karimnagar
8.	Telangana University, Nizamabad
9.	Palamuru University, Mahabubnagar
10.	Jawaharlal Nehru Architecture and Fine Arts University (JNAFAU), Hyderabad

For details with regard to eligibility criteria etc. please visit **www.tsche.ac.in.** Application with bio-data details in the prescribed format along with documentary evidence may be sent by **5.00 PM on or before 12.02.2024,** by registered post to the following address:-
The Principal Secretary to Government, Higher Education (UE) Department, Room No.7, First Floor, Dr. B.R.Ambedkar Telangana Secretariat, Hyderabad - 500 022, **Phone No. +91 - 40-2345 4287, +91 -40-2345 4297.**
Dt. 27.01.2024, Place: Hyderabad **Sd/- BURRA VENKATESHAM, IAS**
R.O. No.: 807-DP/CL-AGENCY/ADVT/1/2023-24 **PRINCIPAL SECRETARY TO GOVERNMENT**

राष्ट्रीय ग्रामीण विकास एवं पंचायती राज संस्थान
NIRDPR
MINISTRY OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT, GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT & PANCHAYATI RAJ
Rajendranagar, Hyderabad-500030
INVITES APPLICATION FOR CAREER IN RURAL DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT
ADMISSION NOTIFICATION
1. AICTE Approved Post Graduate Diploma in Management - Rural Management (PGDM-RM) 2024-26, 2-Years Residential Programme .
Eligibility : Bachelor's Degree with at least 50% Marks (45% for SC/ST/PWD) and a Valid Score in any of the qualifying exams: CAT / XAT / MAT / CMAT / GMAT / ATMA. Shortlisted candidates shall be called for Group Discussion and Personal Interviews for final selection.
i) Last date: 21.04.2024 ii) Commencement of Course : July 2024
2. PG Diploma in Rural Development Management (PGDRDM) 2024- 25, 1-Year Residential Programme .
Eligibility : Bachelor's Degree with at least 50% Marks (45% for SC/ST/PWD)
Selection (PGDRDM): Shortlisted candidates based on their graduation marks shall be called for group discussion and personal interview for final selection.
i) Last date : 21.04.2024 ii) Commencement of Course : July 2024
Optional International Practicum Available
Further details: **www.nirdpr.org.in** or **Email: cpgs.nird@gov.in / 91-9866107450**
Advt.No.03/2024
Comp. no. 7626
Sd/- **Coordinator (Admissions), CPGS & DE**

KARNATAKA INDUSTRIAL AREAS DEVELOPMENT BOARD
(A Government of Karnataka Undertaking)
 # 49, East Wing, 4th & 5th Floor, Khanija Bhavan Race Course Road
Bengaluru – 560 001. Phone No. 080-22265383 website : www.kiadb.in
No. IADB/ENGG/ETND-EP-41/565/2023-24 Date : 25.01.2024
SHORT TERM NOTICE INVITING TENDER
(Through GOK Karnataka Public Procurement Portal Only)
Item rate Tenders under two cover system are invited as per the Karnataka Transparency in Public Procurement Act 1999 and Rules 2000 through electronic procurement from eligible Class-I (Civil) Contractors registered in KPWD who have got adequate financial resources & sufficient past experience for the following works as per the schedule given below:
Name of the work: Formation of Industrial Layout Including Formation of 24M Wide Road, 20M Wide Roads, 18M Wide Road & 12M Wide Road, Including Asphalting, Construction of RCC Side Drains, RCC Cross Drainage Works, HDPE Water Supply Pipeline, GLSR, & OHT at Sector-1 in Mummigatti Industrial Area, Phase-2, Dharwad Taluk & District.
Last date for submission of bids is: **13.02.2024 upto 04:30 pm**
Applicants May Download Bidding Documents from the Karnataka Public Procurement Portal **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in.**
DIPR/CP/3266/Zen/2023-24 **Sd/-**
Chief Engineer-1, KIADB Bengaluru

Office of the Director General, Medical Health & F.W.
Danda Lakhound, Sahastradhara Road, P.O. Gujrada, Dehradun, Uttarakhand
Letter No: 27P/PPP/09/2023/4185 Dated: 25.01.2024
Government of Uttarakhand E-tender Notice
1. Name of Work- Build Operate and Transfer Cardiac Care Unit In Hub and spoke Model Hridhay Rog Chikitsalya, Haldwani as Hub and four spokes at GB Pant Hospital Nainital, SDH Khatima US Nagar, District Hospital Pithoragarh and District Hospital Champawat.
2. Date and time of e-publishing of tender- 30.01.2024 till 14:00 PM
3. Pre Bid Meeting - 15:00 PM on 12/02/2024
4. Closing date of online submission of Tender - 21/02/2024, till 14:00 (IST)
5 Opening date of technical bid Tender - 21/02/2024, till 15:00 (IST)
6 Details of subsequent addendum/corrigendum/cancellation etc. may be obtained from the website https://uktenders.gov.in.
7. **Portal Registration:** The bidder intending to participate in the bid is Required to register in the portal using his/her active personal/ official email id as his/her Login id and attach his/her valid digital signature certificate (DSC) to his/her unique login.
Pre Bid meeting shall be held in the office of **Director General, Medical Health & Family welfare, Danda Lakhound, P.O. Gujrara, Sahastradhara road, Dehradun, Uttarakhand**
For further queries, the bidders may contact through email- mhvuttarakhand@yahoo.com and at Room No 52, Office of the Director General, Medical Health & Family welfare, Danda Lakhound, P.O. Gujrara, Sahastradhara road, Dehradun, Uttarakhand
Director General

INBRIEF

Shooter Preeti Rajak becomes Army's first woman Subedar

Havildar Preeti Rajak, who won a silver medal in the women's trap shooting at the 19th Asian Games at Hangzhou in China last year, has been promoted to the rank of Subedar, becoming the Army's first woman Subedar. Subedar Rajak joined the Corps of Military Police (CMP) in 2022, based on her performance in trap shooting. She was also the first meritorious woman sportsperson in shooting discipline to be enrolled in the Army as a Havildar. During the 19th Asian Games 2022,, Rajak won the silver medal in Trap Women Team Event. She is currently ranked sixth in India (Trap Women Event) and is training at Army Marksmanship Unit, preparing for Paris Olympics 2024, the Army said.

Rajasthan starts drive against illegal mining using drone

The BJP government in Rajasthan has launched a major drive against illegal mining activities by conducting surveys through drones, wherever needed, to put a curb on the sources of such activities. The highest number of 75 illegal mining cases have been detected in Bhilwara district, where the revenue authorities have been alerted. Rajasthan has 81 varieties of minerals in its land, out of which 57 are being commercially exploited. . State Mines Secretary Anandhi said here on Saturday that the revenue authorities had been involved in the campaign to initiate action under the Rajasthan Tenancy Act for cancellation of *khatedari* (title) rights on the land where illegal mining was taking place.

Horn recovered 5 days after Kaziranga rhino was killed

The Assam Forest and police officials have recovered the horn of a rhino five days after it was killed by poachers in the Kaziranga National Park and Tiger Reserve. A man identified as Jagu Pegu was arrested on Friday for possessing the horn, the nasal bone of the rhino, and an assault rifle of the AK series, officials said. The park officials claimed this was the first instance of a horn being recovered less than a week after the killing of a rhino in the tiger reserve, designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Although the post-mortem and DNA reports are awaited, forest officials said the discovery of a rhino carcass on January 26 led to Pegu's arrest.

Cong. slams govt. over hiring for employment in Israel

The Congress on Saturday attacked the Centre over people reportedly queuing up in Uttar Pradesh and Haryana for jobs in Israel, saying it was a reflection of the "grim unemployment situation" in the country and makes a "mockery" of the claims of a booming economy. In a post on X, Congress leader Jairam Ramesh said, "Let us leave aside the ethical, moral and political issues that have gained significance in light of the interim judgment of the International Court of Justice yesterday. Does this not reflect the grim unemployment situation in our own country and does it not make a mockery of claims of a booming job-creating economy?" PTI

SUDOKU

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		2		6				

No.SS6051 Distribution: www.knightfeatures.com

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★☆☆☆☆

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

8	7	6	3	4	2	1	5	9
9	2	5	6	7	1	8	3	4
4	1	3	8	9	5	7	2	6
7	9	8	4	5	3	6	1	2
2	3	4	7	1	6	5	9	8
6	5	1	2	8	9	3	4	7
5	4	7	1	2	8	9	6	3
3	8	9	5	6	4	2	7	1
1	6	2	9	3	7	4	8	5

NExT put on back burner again as NMC seeks comments from stakeholders

The commission has asked to submit feedback by Feb. 7; the exam was envisaged to offer standardised exam for over 700 medical colleges; IMA has been opposing test, stating that it cannot be implemented in current form until NMC ensures uniform standards of education in all medical colleges

Bindu Shajan Perappadan
NEW DELHI

After being in the offing for nearly two years, the National Exit Test (NExT) has hit the pause button yet again this week with the National Medical Commission (NMC), which regulates medical education and medical professionals, seeking comments on the preparation for bringing in this exam.

The NExT will replace the final MBBS exams, the National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test for postgraduate seats (NEET-PG), and the Foreign Medical Graduate Examination (FMGE) for foreign medical graduates to practice medicine in India.

This latest notice comes after the Union Health Ministry constituted a seven-member committee to examine the preparedness of States and medical colleges for the implementation of the NExT for final-year MBBS students of the 2020 batch, this past October. The NMC Act of 2019 had brought in NExT for Indian medical students.

Standardised exam

The exam was envisaged and brought in to offer a standardised exam across the country for all the existing over 700 medical colleges, including government, semi-government, AIIMS, private, or deemed medical colleges.

The latest public notice from the NMC notes that as per the recommendations of the committee constituted by the approval of the Union Health Minister to examine the implementation of conducting the National Exit Test (NExT), the valuable feedback of all the stakeholders is invited by the NMC.

"In this regard, the stakeholders are requested to go through the NMC, National Exit Test Regulations, 2023," said the notice while stating that all the stakeholders concerned have been asked to submit their feedback online by February 7.

As per NExT Regulation, the exam will be conducted in two phases with Step 1 and Step 2 being held twice a year. FILE PHOTO

The latest order seeks to examine the implementation/preparation for conducting the NExT.

IMA opposes

While the Indian Medical Association has been opposing NExT, stating that it is not possible to implement it in the current scenario until the NMC ensures uniform standards of education across medical colleges in India, medical education experts have noted that the standardisation of the exam will force all medical institutes to maintain at least a minimum standard of the education which would help the students crack the exam. They added that the year-on-year pass percentage would also give a clear indication of the quality of education of the medical college and its standing in the country.

"Despite rules and regulation and efforts by the Health Ministry and the NMC, the problem of ghost faculty, low attendance in private medical colleges isn't new. This exam would have ensured that those taking admission into private medical colleges have a point of reference in the form of pass percentage of the institute in NExT. This is a good initiative by the government," said a senior Indian Medical Association member who did not want to be named.

Meanwhile, according to the NExT Regulations, 2023, issued in June last year, the NMC said the exam will be held in two phases with the NExT Step 1 and NExT Step 2 exams being held twice a year. "It is implied that whenever the NExT is in force, the corresponding equivalent existing examinations shall be phased out/cease to be applicable for the purpose for which the NExT shall be appropriate," the regulations had noted.

While NExT Step 1 was to be a theory examination, the NExT Step 2 examination results were to be declared as only 'Pass/Fail" based on the acquisition of appropriate competence that is being evaluated while the marks from NExT Step 2 would be considered to prepare a merit list for admission into broad speciality PG seats.

Practice makes perfection

Walking to the beat: The tri-services band performing during the full dress rehearsal for the Beating Retreat ceremony as part of the Republic Day celebration at Raisina Hills in New Delhi on Saturday. SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

3-D Ramayana shows will be on display for devotees in Ayodhya

Sreeparna Chakrabarty
NEW DELHI

After the consecration of the Ram Temple the focus has now shifted to the making of a museum at Ayodhya which will let visitors get a live experience of the epic 'Ramayana' through immersive 3D technology.

Being touted as an international museum – second only in significance to the Ram Temple for the devotees visiting the city – the new premises will use new-age technology like kinetic art, holograms, animatronics and augmented artificial reality to provide a live experience of the Ramayana as well as the Ram Temple movement. Visitors will also be able to get a live view of the deity through cameras placed inside the temple premises.

The three-storey museum in Ayodhya is coming up at the Ram Katha Park.

To be built over an area of 30,000 sq km, the project is estimated to cost ₹75 crore and would be completed in two phases, sources told *The Hindu*.

While the first phase would focus on upgrading the existing building, the second phase, to be completed within the next two years, would see the museum expanding horizontally with a new building being added. As part of Phase-I, experiential technologies such as immersive scenography, virtual shows and multi-lingual languages would be used to showcase the Ramayana.

Cong. has 'anti-Dalit' mindset: BJP over Pitroda's post on X

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Arjun Ram Meghwal

The BJP on Saturday accused the Congress of being "anti-Dalit", sharing a screenshot of a now-deleted post by Indian Overseas Congress chief Sam Pitroda endorsing Sudheendra Kulkarni's article posted on micro-blogging site X that former Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru's contributions to the Indian Constitution were more than that of B.R. Ambedkar's.

Mr. Kulkarni, a former close aide of BJP veteran L.K. Advani, has in the article said that B.R. Ambedkar was not the maker of India's Constitution and the contribution of then Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru was far greater in its framing than that of Ambedkar.

Union Minister for Law and Justice Arjun Ram Meghwal sought to know whether the rest of the Congress shared Mr. Pitroda's endorsement in the now-deleted post. "The entire world believes that B.R. Ambedkar had played the main role in the making of the Constitution and Pitroda's remarks on his contributions are a reflection of the Congress's mindset of insulting Babasaheb," Mr. Meghwal said.

'Rahul's language'

"Pitroda is speaking Rahul Gandhi's language because the Congress and its leaders are not able to digest welfare and upliftment of Dalits under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government," the Minister charged.

Mr. Meghwal said Ambedkar was the Chairman of the committee set up to draft the Constitution, and when the Constituent Assembly adopted it, one of the members of the drafting panel had said that it was because of Babasaheb that such a big and great Constitution could be drafted.

Kharge writes to Shah about assault on Cong. Manipur chief by a radical group

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Mallikarjun Kharge

Mentioning the assault of Manipur Congress chief Keisham Meghachandra recently by a radical group, Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge on Saturday wrote to Union Home Minister Amit Shah to claim that such a shocking incident points to "a complete collapse of governance".

In his letter, Mr. Kharge also questioned the "inaction" by the State government and the Home Ministry against those who targeted the Manipur Congress chief, who is also a legislator. "On January 24, a meeting was convened of ministers/MPs/MLAs in the historical Kangla Fort in Imphal – a place, as you are aware, that is heavily guarded by Central and State security forces. Many members present in the meeting were compelled and coerced to attend this meeting by an armed group, he claimed. Not only that, the Manipur Congress president and MLA from Wangkhem, Keisham Meghachandra was brutally assaulted and tortured during this meeting," Mr. Kharge said.

On Wednesday, the Arambai Tenggol (AT), a Meitei radical group allegedly at the forefront of the ongoing ethnic conflict in Manipur, had extracted a pledge from MLAs across the State's Imphal Valley to "convey the concerns of the people" to the Centre. The Manipur Congress chief, who is from the Meitei community, is said to have been assaulted by AT during the meeting.

Without naming the group, Mr. Kharge said the shocking incident happened despite the heavy presence of Central and security forces as well as intelligence personnel.

"Till date, there has been no action from Manipur Chief Minister N. Biren Singh and the Home Ministry on this very disturbing subversion of democratic processes by a non-state actor. It is shameful that the Prime Minister's eloquent silence when it comes to Manipur seems to be the prevailing strategy from all important stakeholders in both the State and the Centre," the Congress chief alleged.

Referring to his visit to the State for the flagging off the Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra, he said "The Manipuri society remains bitterly divided and no concrete steps have been taken towards peace, relief and justice for those still suffering from the aftermath of the violence since May 2023".

"Governments come and go, but it is the responsibility of constitutional functionaries to ensure that democratic structures, institutions and processes are protected and preserved," he noted, urging the Home Minister to ensure that democracy and the rule of law prevails in the State.

Centre must administer Kuki-Zo directly: ITLF

The Hindu Bureau
GUWAHATI

A tribal forum in Manipur has asked the Centre to directly administer the Kuki-Zo people caught in an ethnic conflict with the non-tribal Meitei community since May 3, 2023.

The appeal to New Delhi followed almost a day of intermittent gunfight between two unidentified groups in the Kangpokpi district. The gunfight near the Satang Kuki village ended around 4 p.m. Following a public consultation, the ITLF declared on Saturday that the Kuki-Zo people should approach the Mizoram government for "our future political way forward". The Mizoram government has been sympathetic to the Kuki-Zo people.

"We cannot be under the government who killed and destroyed our churches and properties, who separated us physically and demographically and also who took an oath under militia group Arambai Tenggol. The Centre should directly administer us," the ITLF said.

On being a 'pro' smartphone photographer

Participants from diverse walks of life and from ages spanning the teens to the late 60s participated in The Hindu Lit Fest 2024's workshop, "How to be a pro smartphone photographer", facilitated by Gayatri Nair, an arts manager and educator, and one of the co-founders of the Chennai Photo Biennale Foundation. Ms. Nair took queries on how

Gayatri Nair during the workshop. AKHILA EASWARAN

best to use a smartphone camera for various sorts of photo requirements, and then had the participants do a photography exercise.

A recipe for success in the new era

Chefs, over the past few years, have moved from lives of anonymity in the kitchen to a spot in the limelight. These days, though celebrity chefs may be rockstars, some of the biggest names remember and treasure those kitchens they started out in. In a conversation with Shonali Muthalaly of *The Hindu Metroplus* on "Beyond the kitchen: chefs forging a fresh culinary landscape", chefs Sashi Cheliah, Manu Chandra, and Thomas Zacharias discussed a new era of culinary creativity. The panel talked about food trends, social media, and the challenges of running successful businesses.

"When I got into cooking, it was with the desire to cook and feed people great food. Today, all the awards and glamour draw the youngsters in. There is a difference between the expectations they come with and what they face," said Mr. Zacharias.

Chefs Manu Chandra, Sashi Cheliah and Thomas Zacharias in conversation with Shonali Muthalaly at The Hindu Lit Fest 2024 at Sir Mutha Venkatasubba Rao concert hall in Chennai on Saturday. R. RAVINDRAN

Rendering verses to hues on canvas

Pencils, paints, crayons, charcoal and white paper — a familiar scene at any art workshop, but this one had an addition — an extract from a poem. At The Hindu Lit Fest 2024's "Verse to Canvas" workshop, the participants read various extracts from poems given to them, and then attempted to translate what resonated from the poem with

Participants at the art workshop. AKHILA EASWARAN

them into creative expressions on paper. Facilitator of RainbowFish Studio, Nivedha Leoni, showed the participants similar work that had been done by her students.

The legends who revolutionised the leadership and work culture in ISRO

S. Somanath, the Chairman of the space agency, credits the vision of his predecessors like Vikram Sarabhai, Satish Dhawan, A.P.J. Abdul Kalam and Madhavan Nair for what ISRO is today; he says that leadership isn't about individuals, rather it is about the ability to transform people along with you

Madhuvanti S. Krishnan
CHENNAI

ISRO Chairman S. Somanath speaks at The Hindu Lit Fest, 2024 in Chennai on Saturday. R. RAVINDRAN

Think of a rocket launch, and one is sure to imagine a control room full of chaos and scientists moving about in a frenzy. S. Somanath, Chairman, Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), debunked this myth, at the Lit Fest session "Transformative leadership in ISRO: my experience".

"During a launch, everyone in the main centre is at ease; they manage the most complex activities with the utmost calm, in an organised and disciplined manner," he revealed.

He spoke of multiple stalwarts in the organisation, including Vikram Sarabhai, Satish Dhawan, A.P.J. Abdul Kalam and G. Madhavan Nair, who revolutionised the leadership and work culture of the organisation.

"In the 1960s, there was space race between Russia and the U.S. Though India wasn't a space power then, Vikram Sarabhai had great dreams for the future. He went on to create what ISRO is today. Though there was no clarity on how rockets or satellites were to be built, undeterred, he would often work through the night to come up with what could be done."

After his death came Satish Dhawan who brought in multiple changes in the organisation, and things became more structured, Mr. Somanath said.

A game changer

"He started the SLV programme which was a game changer, and also brought in Abdul Kalam. Dhawan closed down multiple programmes in the organisation for they wouldn't bring in any outcomes; he left open only those programmes that would bring results. This was a game changer and resulted in bringing in the SLV programme. The Dhawan diagram, a graph which would talk of the kind of programmes that could be done, was popular. He was a visionary who foresaw many things which we would go on to do in the future," he said.

As for Kalam, his uniqueness lay in identifying the right people for the right job, he said. Kalam also had a habit of ensuring that only people from different States were put together in teams. Another method he brought in was configuration control – what was defined had to be written down, drawings had to be made, and changes could not be made after that. He also created a culture of quality assurance processes which ISRO follows till date. His biggest competencies however, Mr. Somanath continued, were with people. "He could make leaders out of ordinary individuals."

Inspiration abounds

Mr. Somanath also pointed out how at ISRO, unlike other organisations, newcomers had the opportunity to choose whom they wanted to work under.

He also added how ISRO gave importance to what youngsters thought. "Even though I am chairman, youngsters can question me. Great ideas come out of such discussions."

He concluded the session by saying, "Leadership isn't about some individuals; rather, it is about the ability to transform people along with you. The spirit of the team is what drives the organisation and becomes an integral part of the success story."

INBRIEF

Amish Tripathi and Bhavna Roy in conversation with Anita Ratnam. B. VELANKANNI RAJ

Idol worshipping makes you intuitively liberal: Tripathi

Temples at the heart of the economic life leads to better outcomes and are places for building national consciousness traditionally, said author Amish Tripathi, referring to his recent visit to Ayodhya for the inauguration of the Ram Temple. Mr. Tripathi and author Bhavna Roy were in conversation with dancer, choreographer and writer Anita Ratnam about their latest book *Idols: Unearthing the Power of Murti Puja* in a session titled "The power of idol worship". Speaking on idol worship, both speakers explained the various points of the practice, their research, and including the process of choosing Lord Ganesha as the focal point of the book. Mr. Tripathi added that while he wasn't claiming that idol worshipping is perfect, he does believe that it "makes you intuitively liberal".

Monika Halan and Aarathi Krishnan.

The need for women to put on 'money oxygen masks'

Women should be made part of money conversations in households, said Monika Halan, a personal finance writer, speaker, and author. "Generally, women who are left without assets have very poor personal experiences. So, women, please put on your money oxygen masks," Ms. Halan said. Ms. Halan, author of *Let's Talk Mutual Funds,* was in conversation with Aarathi Krishnan, Consulting Editor, *businessline,* on the topic "Let's talk money: making your money work for you".

Tarana Husain Khan and Rakesh Raghunathan in conversation with Deepa S. Reddy. B. VELANKANNI RAJ

Memory and taste: on archiving heirloom recipes

Indigenous ingredients, the appropriate vessels to cook different dishes in, and the proper way to document and pass on heirloom recipes were among the topics discussed during the session "A taste of memory: a celebration of food and family". Moderated by Deepa S. Reddy, the panel comprised food raconteur Rakesh Raghunathan and writer Tarana Husain Khan.

Sponsors

The event is presented by GSquare, in association with NITTE deemed-to-be university and Christ University. The knowledge partner is Vellore Institute of Technology; online grocery partner: Big Basket; associate partner: Blue Star, FIITJEE, Navrathan Jewellers and Shiv Nadar University, DelhiNCR ; author lounge partner: VFS Global; food partner: WOW! Momo; education partner: SSVM Institutions, Coimbatore; bookstore partner: Higginbothams; organic partner: Akshayakalpa; water partner: Repute; gift partner: Anand Prakash; and hospitality partner: Taj Coromandel, Chennai, The Brew Room

Navigating the 'viral world' of disinformation and toxic news

Sudipta Datta

(From right) Sreenivasan Jain, Pratik Sinha and N. Ram in conversation with Ziya us Salam. R. RAVINDRAN

How do you counter the Hindutva ecosystem where the common well is being poisoned by disinformation campaigns and bogus claims, which are impacting lives? A panel of journalists comprising Sreenivasan Jain, N. Ram and Pratik Sinha discussed the issue threadbare in a conversation moderated by Ziya Us Salam, Associate Editor, *The Hindu*, at a session titled "A viral world: countering fake news".

In Mr. Jain's new book, *Love Jihad and Other Fictions*, co-authored with Mariyam Alavi and Supriya Sharma, the journalists picked the most virulent examples of fake propaganda, including love jihad and population jihad, and debunked the theories with data, on-ground research and investigation. The problem, said Mr. Jain, is that these theories are being platformed at the highest level, by elected representatives.

Pratik Sinha, co-founder of Alt News, who had co-authored a book, *India Misinformed, The True Story*, in 2019, said that before the 2019 election, there was some amount of criticality, which is no longer the case. He said the issue of disinformation is many-layered, "it's both political and cultural".

Mr. Ram, Director, The Hindu Group Publishing Private Ltd., said there were two aspects to countering fake news, "and one is to safeguard your own media organisation from the invasion of disinformation and misinformation". Mr. Ram said disinformation was deliberate and motivated, and toxic news was weaponised and scaled up on social media platforms, while misinformation was not intentional; reporting and editing failures could be easily corrected. But the bigger challenge, he said, is how to combat the disinformation spread on bigger platforms such as Meta, Google, or even X (formerly Twitter).

All the journalists agreed that it was important to "document our times", truthfully and with stringent standards of reporting and research. They stressed the importance of an independent media, a space which is "shrinking", with Mr. Jain offering a sobering statistic about India's low rank on the World's Press Freedom Index. Is it possible to cultivate a temper of zero tolerance to fake news? "The fight has to continue," summed up Mr. Ziya Us Salam.

'Written text can't be the only source for Dalit history'

Pon Vasanth B.A.
CHENNAI

Stalin Rajangam (left) and G. Gurusamy. R. RAVINDRAN

Inadequate documentary evidence was a unique challenged faced while writing Dalit history, and therefore, writing it could not be primarily dependent on written text as the source, said writer and historian Stalin Rajangam.

In a conversation with G. Gurusamy, writer, researcher and Head of the Department of Tamil in Arul Anandar College in Madurai district, during a session titled "Dalit history: text and context reading and reconstructing Dalit history through Dalit non-fiction", Mr. Rajangam said history was constructed based on what could and what could not come to text in the past to become a primary source for writing history later.

Oral history

"Absence of documentary evidence cannot mean that Dalits did not have history," he said. Thus, he added, there was a need to rely on oral history, proverbs and remnants in culture and traditions and deconstructing them based on the path shown by Pandit Iyothee Thass to understand the history.

He said that the publication of Thass's writings by G. Aloysius in the late 1990s proved to be a turning point in writing Dalit history as his writings helped in changing several stereotypical perceptions that existed about Dalits before.

Mr. Gurusamy said several castes wrote "stories" about their imagined histories and termed these as "*Puranas*" to accord them sanctity. He said it was during the writing of such stories that the Dalits were projected as being in the lowest of the hierarchy so as to establish the relatively higher positions of their respective castes.

He argued that the *Manusmriti* was not written by one person at a particular point in time but evolved with contributions by many, which were often contradictory, over a period of time.

To a question from the audience on the alleged hesitance in questioning the role of intermediate castes in the violence witnessed in the present times against Dalits in Tamil Nadu, and relegating the opposition to caste to the limited scope of opposing Brahmins, Mr. Gurusamy said blaming only the Brahmins for caste-based discrimination was an injustice.

The inside story: anecdotes from a stint on the other side of the border

Sudipta Datta

Ajay Bisaria (left) and Varghese K. George. R. RAVINDRAN

Urdu poetry, diplomatic missives, and the nuclear question – the last High Commissioner to Pakistan Ajay Bisaria shared his journey and gave his insights on India-Pakistan relations in a conversation with Varghese K. George, Resident Editor, *The Hindu*, New Delhi.

Quoting snippets from his new book, *Anger Management*, in a session titled "India's last High Commissioner to Pakistan: the inside story", Mr. Bisaria regaled the audience with anecdotes from his stint in Pakistan – he was expelled in 2019 after the abrogation of Article 370 – and as private secretary to Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee.

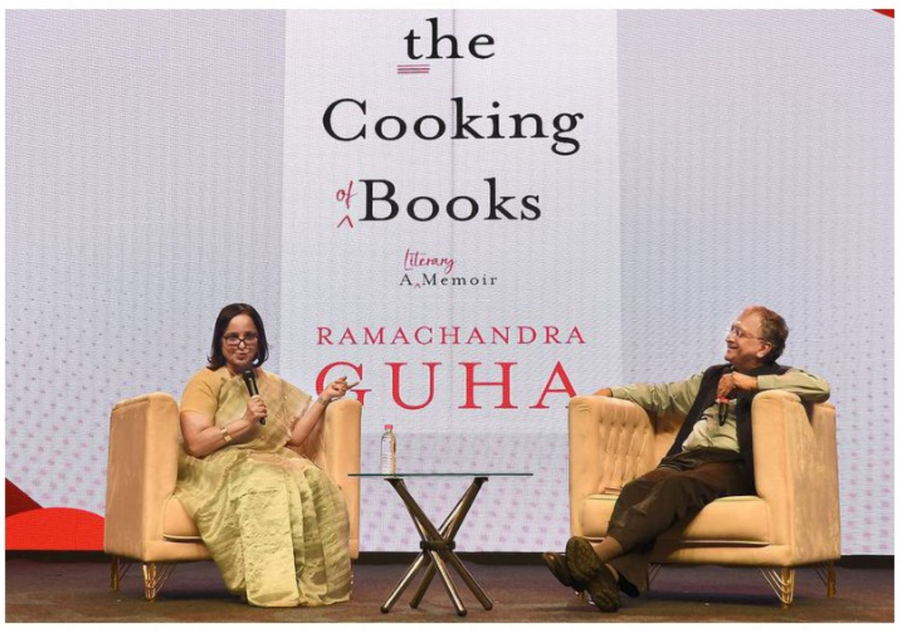
Mr. Bisari said when he went to Pakistan in 2017, Prime Minister Narendra Modi told him to take a message of peace for the people of Pakistan, saying "that is what we expect in return", and that became a mandate for his public conversation in Pakistan. But there were challenges in the form of threats, aggressive surveillance and other kinds of harassment.

He said before the surgical strikes of 2016 and the Balakot air strikes of 2019, India did not have an answer to Pakistan's proxy war.

The memoir of a writer-editor bonhomie

Historian Ramachandra Guha, in a conversation with Nirmala Lakshman, Chairperson, The Hindu Group, says that his letters with his editor Rukun Advani formed the basis of his work, *The Cooking of Books*, an 'eccentric, idiosyncratic personal memoir of a relationship of more than 40 years'

Radhika Santhanam
CHENNAI



Ramachandra Guha talks to Nirmala Lakshman about his relationship with his editor Rukun Advani, at The Hindu Lit Fest at Sir Mutha Concert Hall in Chennai on Saturday. B. VELANKANNI RAJ

While it is common for editors to write about the authors with whom they have worked, it is rarely the other way round. In the session titled "The cooking of books", after Ramachandra Guha's latest book of the same name, the historian and writer spoke to Nirmala Lakshman, Chairperson, The Hindu Group, about the mercurial relationship he shares with his "self-effacing" editor Rukun Advani, the "kind of man you will never see at a literary festival".

Dr. Guha described the book, his shortest one yet, as an "eccentric, idiosyncratic personal memoir of a relationship of more than 40 years". The idea for the book emerged during the pandemic, when Dr. Guha, a man of habit, could not make his regular pilgrimages to archives. Confined to home, he began leafing through his own private archives and realised that his letters with Mr. Advani formed the bulk of it. The letters formed the basis of the book.

Dr. Guha read out portions of the book: delightful anecdotes by writers Mukul Kesavan and Amitav Ghosh. He then recalled how he and Mr. Advani found each other. Both were Stephanians – while Dr. Guha was a chatty, budding cricket player with little interest in history or music then, Mr. Advani spoke little and spent his evenings listening to Beethoven. Their professional relationship began when Dr. Guha sent his first work, on Verrier Elwin, to Mr. Advani for edits.

Each draft would come back with suggestions and rewrites and comments such as, "This is fine as a study of Elwin, a scholar and public intellectual, but where is the human being?" and in the next draft: "This is a fine work of Elwin the son and lover, but where is the scholar?" It was only after several drafts that Mr. Advani was satisfied.

A 'clever tribute'

Mr. Advani is as famous for being reticent as Dr. Guha is known to be outspoken – so much so that Dr. Guha dedicated the book to the "second-best editor he knows", his wife Sujata. Mr. Advani was delighted by this clever tribute, recalled Dr. Guha. "He said, 'I'm not there on the page, yet I'm on the page!'"

Mr. Advani is not just Dr. Guha's editor but has made "at least 50-60 sociologists writers in India," Dr. Guha said. They include Romila Thapar, Partha Chatterjee, Upinder Singh, Jean Dreze, and A.R. Venkatachalapathy. Despite staying in the wings and allowing others to take credit for his formidable work, Mr. Advani was fired by Oxford University Press. Later, he went on to establish Permanent Black, an academic imprint, along with his wife, novelist and editor Anuradha Roy.

Dr. Guha was keen to note that while Mr. Advani is reserved, he is very caring. When a scholar was denied a visa in India, he pulled out all the stops to ensure that he somehow got it, he said.

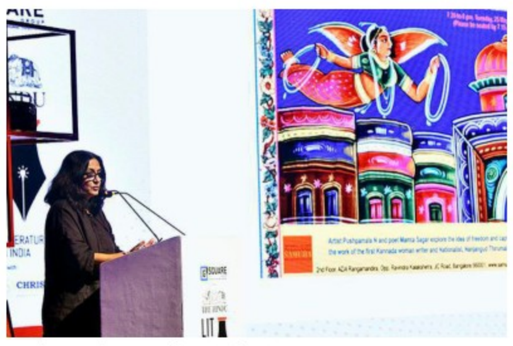
When Ms. Lakshman asked how the redoubtable Mr. Advani reacted to the book, Dr. Guha said, "He didn't edit very much, it was edited mostly by others. And he very sweetly said, 'This is the longest thank you note that anyone has written for anyone.'"

INBRIEF

Tarun Tahiliani in conversation with Rosella Stephen at The Hindu Lit Fest. B. VELANKANNI RAJ

Indian fashion industry is brimming with ideas: Tarun

The conversation between Rosella Stephen, who edits *The Hindu Magazine,* and Tarun Tahiliani began with a mention of his book, *Tarun Tahiliani: Journey to India Modern* (Roli Books), a culmination of 25 years of the fashion designer's career. The conversation touched upon the various aspects of India's journey with couture and fashion, and Mr. Tahiliani noted that it was time, he thought, for Indian fashion to "put the maharaja and the tiger to bed". He spoke of the Indian fashion industry brimming with opportunities and new ideas. "The Gen Z are more relaxed in their skin," he said, adding that now, the industry is entering a nice time, and there is a huge diversity in what designers do.


Pushpamala N. at The Hindu Lit Fest. R. RAVINDRAN

The idea of nation and woman's place in it

In the session titled "The Body Politic", Pushpamala N., a sculptor-turned-photo, video, and light performance artist, displayed her satirical work which addresses the idea of the nation, particularly the woman's place in the nation. The term "body politic" is a pun, she said, referring to both society as a political body as well as her own physical body, which she uses in her work. "The woman is often objectified in art. Performing and being the subject is to be both object and subject and it makes me central to the argument and narrative," she explained. In her work, Ms. Pushpamala explores the ubiquitous symbol of Mother India. This image, which first originated in the 19th century, has gone through several iterations since, she said.

Author Chandan Gowda in conversation with Suresh Seshadri. R. RAVINDRAN

An illustration of the two Indias of the present

Half of us in India, said Chandan Gowda, have had a modern education – a dry, unevocative, British-induced utilitarian education, the goal of which is to make one employable anywhere in an industrialised society. The other half, the one that hasn't had this education, has a whole range of other moral conversations and living traditions that the first half has been actively removed from. Mr. Gowda, author of *Another India: Events, Memories, People*, was in conversation with Suresh Seshadri, National Business Editor, *The Hindu*. The shrinking of the moral imagination in present times, said Mr. Seshadri, was a running theme, woven through the vignettes of people and folklore in the book.

How to navigate pain and turn it into a catalyst of positivity

Soma Basu
CHENNAI

Shweta Singh Kirti in conversation with Chitra Mahesh. B. VELANKANNI RAJ

Shweta Singh Kirti, the author of *Pain: A Portal to Enlightenment* and sister of actor Sushant Singh Rajput, kicked off the second day's Lit Fest sessions with a prayer.

At *The Hindu* Pavilion on Saturday, she said everybody should embrace pain by practising silence to calm their grieving minds.

Drawing from her own experiences and spiritual practice over the years, Ms. Singh said she had written the book to handhold those who had lost a loved one.

Discussing the book during a conversation with Chitra Mahesh, a former journalist, Ms. Singh said that retreats in solitude, immersive meditation, and holistic well-being had helped her deal with the huge emotional challenge of the death of her brother. It was a double whammy because the heartache she endured as a teenager following the loss of her mother, was replayed. "It was like losing a limb," she said.

To come to terms with Rajput's death, she decided to embark on a transmuting journey to find inner peace.

Open wound

During the session, Ms. Singh broke down while talking about the tragic circumstances of her brother's death, and how it was still like an open wound.

"Pain is an inescapable experience, but suffering is optional," Ms. Singh said. Her book synthesises the science of trauma, spirituality, and philosophy and guides readers to rise above suffering and the limits they create for themselves with attachment to goals such as money, fame, success, and relationships.

She talked about the tools and techniques she had adopted to transform her pain into a powerful force, and hoped her book would help others wrestling with similar emotions.

To overcome the overwhelming nature of pain, she practised karma yoga for the purification of the physical body, bhakti yoga for emotional catharsis, gyan yoga to sharpen the intellect, and raj yoga to sharpen focus.

Indians have spirituality and faith downloaded in their systems, she felt, and a spiritual journey helped in the freeing of the self from the burden of carrying the identity of mind and body.

"You just have to be aware of your existence," she said.

Being a translator: the challenging, lonely journey with many stages

Soma Basu
CHENNAI

Daisy Rockwell in conversation with K. Srilata. R. RAVINDRAN

U.S.-based translator Daisy Rockwell, whose translation of Geetanjali Shree's Hindi work into English, *Tomb of Sand*, won the International Booker Prize in 2022, says a translation is successful when it stands on its own.

Conversing with K. Srilata, a linguaphile who has studied French, Latin, ancient Greek, and German, during the session "Double distilled fiction", Ms. Rockwell said that to be able to engage deeply with another text and create the translated literature as a delightful and evocative read set in the milieu of the original text was a challenge.

Ms. Rockwell, a Ph.D. in South Asian literature, said that after she had strayed into Hindi in college, she never left it and had created greater awareness of the richness of Hindi literature by translating classic literary works such as Bhisham Sahni's *Tamas* and Krishna Sobti's *A Gujarat Here, A Gujarat There*.

Ms. Rockwell said when she started translating Hindi novels, she knew nothing about India.

"Translation is like a journey with many stages. My magic number is usually 10 drafts when I reach the stage of the original text becoming a good English text," she said.

'Text chooses me'

Asked how she selected the books for translating, she said the text often chose her.

"The language has to interest me and the power of the narrative has to be simple and draw me," she said. "Translation is a process and I analyse it like a scientist."

Translating *Tomb of Sand* was like unravelling a sweater using different yarn for Ms. Rockwell. When you have the comfort of knowing the author, it helps.

"I had to play along Geetanjali's word play, her style of writing; she breaks grammar and conventional story telling and English is a global language with vast readership and I have to bring in the diversity," she said.

"To be able to retain the authentic flavour of the Hindi text comes with responsibility," added Ms. Rockwell, who took 10 years to understand, and feel comfortable in, Hindi, and finds contemporary writing more difficult.

Describing translation as a lonely business, Ms. Rockwell expressed happiness that translated works and translators were becoming more visible now.

'Annihilation of caste is a joint effort'

Pon Vasanth B.A.
CHENNAI

Azhagiya Periyavan in conversation with Perumal Murugan. R. RAVINDRAN

Annihilation of caste, though an onerous task, has to happen and it can be done only through a joint effort, writer Azhagiya Periyavan says.

In a discussion with writer Perumal Murugan on "Narratives of the oppressed: voices of assertion", Mr. Periyavan said it was fearful to hear voices saying that caste could not be annihilated.

He said there was a huge difference between someone asking him, "Aren't you a writer?" and "Aren't you that Dalit writer?" He said it was important to remember B.R. Ambedkar's statement that caste was a state of mind.

Mr. Periyavan said Dalit literature, which emerged in a big way in Tamil in the 1990s coinciding with Ambedkar's birth centenary, had had a huge impact in the past three decades.

He said he could confidently say that if 10 best contemporary Tamil writers had to be named, five of them would be Dalits. He said Tamil literature getting translated into English gained momentum after the emergence of Dalit literature.

Portrayal of Dalit lives

Mr. Periyavan said portrayal of Dalit lives by non-Dalits could be considered Dalit literature or writings towards human equality if they were written without patronising the Dalits and after properly comprehending their voices for their rights.

He, however, said a lot of such writings had been severely problematic.

Unravelling the 'mysterious minds' behind popular crime fiction

Anuja Chauhan, Harini Nagendra, Kiran Manral and Tarun Mehrishi in conversation with K.C. Vijaya Kumar. B. VELANKANNI RAJ

Madhuvanti S. Krishnan
CHENNAI

How popular is crime fiction as a genre? What goes on in the world of crime and in the minds of writers as they belt out murder mysteries? These and multiple other mysteries were debated at the session "A crime wave", in a conversation among authors Anuja Chauhan, Harini Nagendra, Kiran Manral, and Tarun Mehrishi, moderated by *The Hindu* Sports Editor K.C. Vijaya Kumar.

Discussing the often inevitable book-to-movie nexus, Ms. Chauhan explained how writers could not afford to ignore the call of Bollywood or the wider film world when it comes. "If you are looking to make decent money writing, you cannot turn down people who want to convert your book into a screenplay," she said.

Much of her joy in writing, she said, lay in getting into people's heads, the beef, and the politicking. "Nothing happens in a vacuum. Crime doesn't happen in isolation... Murder mysteries aren't merely 'whodunits' but 'whydunits' and 'howdunits'. The motive and character are important," she said.

The authors also discussed what made them fall in love with crime fiction. Ms. Nagendra spoke of historical crime fiction and how she grew up loving golden-age fiction such as Agatha Christie's mysteries. She also explained how, in her book, she has largely dealt with Bengaluru, and a strong sense of nostalgia for the city plays a role.

The specifics

What makes authors zero in on the specifics of what they write about? For Ms. Nagendra, the reason she wrote a lot on feminist issues, for instance, was because it was personal; there were women in her family who were denied the opportunities to read and write.

Ms. Manral said she enjoyed reading the local flavours that come through in such books. "They often bring out places which we feel a certain sense of a familiarity with. They aren't hard-boiled detective fiction; they are fun reads that take us through local places, people, and more," she said.

Mr. Mehrishi shed light on how he did not have to jump through hoops to complete his book. "The trick is in balancing reality with fiction. In that case, you aren't trying to demean history. You can interpret it slightly differently as no one really knows all of the truth," he said.

Unlike romance fiction, where competition is cutthroat, horror and crime writers are supportive of each other, Ms. Nagendra said.

Ms. Manral, however, admitted that she worked in a bubble.

Chromosome study reveals low genetic diversity of Arabica coffee

The Hindu Bureau

Based on a chromosome-level assembly, a study published in *Nature Communications* reveals the sources of genetic diversity of Arabica coffee; the genetic diversity may contribute to its unique flavour and resistance to pathogens. About 60% of global coffee production is from the Arabica coffee species.

Commercial coffee is mainly produced from *Coffea canephora* and *Coffea arabica*, known as Robusta and Arabica coffee, respectively. Arabica coffee is derived from the hybridisation between the ancestors of present-day Robusta coffee and another closely related coffee species, *Coffea eugeniodes*.

Complex genome

This hybridisation resulted in Arabica's coffee flavour and its large and complex genome, which poses challenges for breeding and genetic studies. Several partial genome assemblies of Arabica coffee are currently available, but the mechanisms generating its genetic diversity are unclear.

Michele Morgante from the Istituto di Genomica Applicata, Udine, Italy, and others employed the latest sequencing technologies to generate a more complete genome assembly for Arabica coffee, allowing for a detailed analysis of the structure of its chromosomes. When analysing the genome, including previously inaccessible regions, such as those around centromeres, they found differences in the structure, function and evolution of the genomes contributed by its two progenitor species, especially for genes involved in caffeine biosynthesis.

The authors also analysed the genomes of 174 samples collected from different species within the Coffea genus and noticed a very low level of genetic diversity within Arabica coffee.

Diversity was found to increase in some Arabica coffee cultivars at specific genomic regions, due to two different sources of variation: chromosomal abnormalities and genetic segments donated by a Robusta-Arabica hybrid, known as the Timor Hybrid. This hybrid has become the parental line of many modern cultivars that combine the disease resistance trait of Robusta coffee and the unique flavour of Arabica coffee.

The authors suggest that the genetic diversity of Arabica coffee is essential for its commercial success, and the findings may help develop new coffee varieties with desirable traits, such as disease resistance or different flavour profiles.

Minimal radioactive discharges from Indian nuclear plants: study

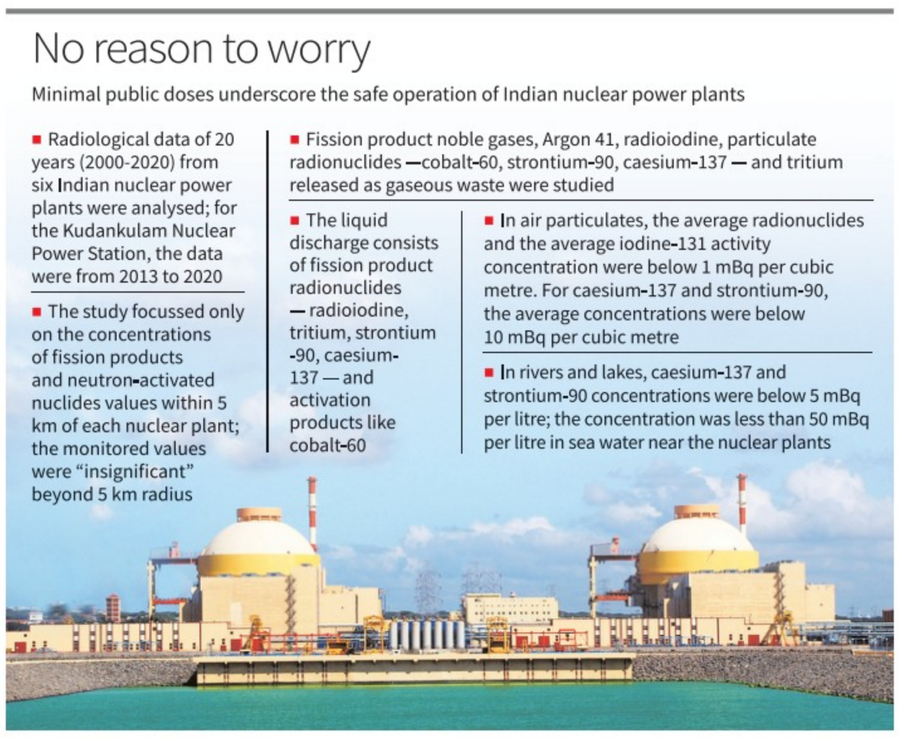
While samples were collected and measured for maximum radius of 30 km of each nuclear plant, the concentrations of fission products beyond 5 km radius was below the minimum detectable activity of the instruments used

R. Prasad

Based on an analysis of radiological data of 20 years (2000-2020) from six nuclear power plants based in India, researchers at the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC), Mumbai have found that the radioactive discharges from the nuclear plants and the resultant potential environmental impact have been "minimal". "The findings hold potential significance for reinforcing India's commitment to advancing its nuclear power programme," the authors write.

The period of study for the Kudankulam Nuclear Power Station is from 2013 to 2020. The other six power plants studied are: Tarapur Atomic Power Station, Madras Atomic Power Station, Kaiga Generating Station, Rajasthan Atomic Power Station, Narora Atomic Power Station, and Kakrapar Atomic Power Station. The results were published recently in the journal Science of the Total Environment.

While samples were collected and measured for a maximum radius of 30 km of each nuclear plant, the study found that the concentrations of fission products beyond 5 km radius was below the minimum detectable activity of the instruments used, implying that the monitored values were "insignificant". The study has therefore focussed only on the concentrations of fission products and neutron-activated nuclides values within 5 km of each nuclear plant.



The gaseous waste that is released to the atmosphere through stacks consists of fission product noble gases, Argon 41, radioiodine, particulate radionuclides –cobalt-60, strontium-90, caesium-137 – and tritium. The liquid discharge consists of fission product radionuclides – radioiodine, tritium, strontium -90, caesium-137 – and activation products like cobalt-60.

The radioactive discharges are carried out through dilution and dispersion and by "adhering to strict radiological and environmental regulatory regimes". As per the study, average gross alpha activity in air particulates at all the seven nuclear plants was less than 0.1 megabecquerel (mBq) per cubic metre. "Though these gross values in air particulates appeared to be nearly the same across all the nuclear power plants, the Narora atomic power station (NAPS) exhibited higher maximum values than the other nuclear plants. This was attributed to the higher atmospheric dust load at NAPS compared to the other sites," the authors write.

In the case of specific marker, the average radionuclides (iodine-131, caesium-137, and strontium-90) in air particulates across all the seven sites and the average iodine-131 activity concentration was below 1 mBq per cubic metre, while in the case of caesium-137 and strontium-90, the average concentrations were three orders lower and below 10 microbecquerel per cubic metre, they write.

In the case of rivers and lakes, the concentration of caesium-137 and strontium-90 were below 5 mBq per litre, while the concentration was less than 50 megabecquerel per litre in sea water near the nuclear plants. In the case of sediments, caesium-137 concentration was maximum in the case of the Rajasthan Atomic Power Station, while strontium-90 concentration in the sediments recorded a maximum in the Narora atomic power station sediments. "These values are within the statistical variation of values observed in natural sediments, and do not show any trend of deposition or accumulation of activity in the environment," they note.

The higher levels of caesium-137 seen at the Rajasthan Atomic Power Station is "likely due to the accumulation of caesium-137 discharged to the water bodies through scavenging and sedimentation process and because of the high distribution coefficient of the sediment at this site," they write.

The authors stress that tritium was found "detectable above the minimum detectable activity in all the sites except in the Kudankulam Nuclear Power Station". In the case of the Kudankulam power plant, tritium was "not detected in any single time during the period of study", while its concentration was "relatively higher" at the Rajasthan Atomic Power Station.

Though the total doses have been lower than the regulatory limits, the total dose at the Rajasthan atomic power station, Madras atomic station and Tarapur atomic power station have been relatively higher. This is because at both the Rajasthan and Madras power stations, the "air-cooled reactor assemblies result in activation of natural argon to radioactive argon-41" before being released into the environment. The nuclear power plants constructed after the Rajasthan and Madras stations use carbon-dioxide instead of air in the annulus space between the calandria tube and pressure tube. This results in reduced production and release of argon-41 by other power plants.

Even though the total doses of Rajasthan, Madras and Tarapur power plants are below the regulatory limits and thus deemed to be safe to the public, efforts are being taken at all three sites to limit the doses further so as to keep the doses as low as reasonably achievable (ALARA), they note.

Western Equine Encephalitis outbreak in Argentina

Bani Jolly
Vinod Scaria

On December 20, 2023, the International Health Regulations National Focal Point (IHR NFP) in Argentina alerted the Pan American Health Organization/World Health Organization (PAHO/WHO) of a human case of Western Equine Encephalitis Virus (WEEV) infection. The patient had a sudden onset fever and neurological features on November 19, 2023 and was later admitted to a provincial hospital, and discharged on close follow-up on December 20. The outbreak has since grown to 21 confirmed new cases of the infection in Argentina and comes after more than two decades since the last case was reported in the country. The last cases of human infections in Argentina were reported in 1982, 1983, and an isolated event in 1996. The present outbreak also comes in the context of an ongoing outbreak in horses in Argentina and Uruguay. Multiple outbreaks and human cases of Westen Equine Encephalitis have been reported in the past from the U.S. and Canada and over 3,000 cases of infection have been reported over these years.

Mosquito-borne infection

Western Equine Encephalitis is a mosquito-borne infection caused by the WEEV, which belongs to the Togaviridae family of viruses. The virus has an approximately 11.5 kilobases long single-stranded RNA genome and is a recombinant of the eastern equine encephalitis virus and a Sindbis-like virus.

Passerine birds are thought to be the reservoir and equine species as intermediate hosts. The primary mode of transmission of the infection to humans is through mosquitoes which act as vectors for the virus. While most of the infections are asymptomatic, the infection may lead to severe consequences in rare cases. An estimated 4-5% of cases may manifest as infection/inflammation of the brain, resulting in neurological symptoms and sequelae of disease. With no specific antiviral treatment, symptomatic care is crucial, especially for neurologic symptoms.

The culprit: The primary mode of transmission of the infection to humans is through mosquitoes, which act as vectors for the virus. ISTOCKPHOTO

In Argentina, there have been 1,258 cases of infections in animals in 15 provinces, with the province of Buenos Aires having the highest number of cases. In Uruguay, there have been 56 cases of Western Equine Encephalitis Virus in equines, with no reported human infections. After the detection of the initial case of the ongoing outbreak in Argentina reported in December 2023, a total of 91 additional suspected cases have since been tested across 11 provinces in the country out of which 21 have been confirmed positive for the virus. Of these cases, eight individuals needed intensive care unit care, 13 required general hospitalization and one case resulted in a fatality. In the cases for which exposure history is available, three individuals were veterinarians, two were construction workers, and two reported engaging in outdoor recreational activities.

While PAHO/WHO has issued an alert on the risk of the spread of WEEV in the Americas, enhanced surveillance and detection of infections will be crucial for preventing the spread of the virus. Following a One Health approach is essential for the control of the virus. Environmental modifications, vector control, and vaccination for equines in affected and high-risk regions to curb the potential spread of the virus.

(Bani Jolly is a senior scientist at Karkinos Healthcare and Vinod Scaria is a senior consultant at Vishwanath Cancer Care Foundation)

SNAPSHOTS

Carbon emissions from oil sands underestimated

New measurements of total gaseous organic carbon concentrations in the air over the Athabasca oil sands in Canada suggest that traditional methods of estimating this pollution can severely underestimate emissions. Aircraft-based measurements reveal that the total gaseous organic carbon emissions from oil sands operations exceed industry-reported values by 1,900% to over 6,300% across the studied facilities. Emissions from both surface mining operations and extraction from deeper in situ deposits of bitumen were studied.

Invasion of non-native species can lead to ecosystem shifts

At a Kenyan conservancy, the invasive big-headed ant species disrupted a mutualism between native ants and acacia trees, in which the native ants protected trees from grazers in exchange for a place to live. When the invasive ants pushed out the native ants, the trees were left vulnerable to overgrazing by elephants, who browsed and broke trees at five to seven times the rate in areas with invasive ants. Due to a more open landscape, lions were left without hiding places stalk their preferred prey of zebras.

Retinal imaging may predict the risk of chronic conditions

Based on retinal images and data gathered from more than 44,000 people, scientists have discovered connections between the thickness of the retina and risk of a range of neuropsychiatric, and cardiometabolic diseases. Retinal imaging might provide a new avenue to detect or predict conditions such as heart disease. The researchers discovered a link between retinal layers and heart and kidney disease – thinner layers of photoreceptor segments correlated with poorer heart and lung function.

Question Corner

Silent flight

What enables owls to fly silently?

Owls' wings make no noise while flying, enabling them to accurately locate their prey while remaining undetected. While many studies have linked the micro-fringes in owl wings to their silent flight, the exact mechanisms have been unclear. Now, a team of researchers has uncovered the effects of these micro-fringes on the sound and aerodynamic performance of owl wings through computational fluid dynamic simulations. These trailing-edge fringes play a crucial role in suppressing the noise produced by wing flap-induced air movement. Simulations revealed that the trailing-edge fringes reduced the noise levels of owl wingsand maintained aerodynamic performance comparable to owl wings without fringes. Researchers found that the fringes reduce the fluctuations in airflow by breaking up the trailing edge vortices, and they reduce the flow interactions between feathers at the wingtips, thereby suppressing the shedding of wingtip vortices. Synergistically, these mechanisms enhance the effects of trailing-edge fringes, improving aerodynamic force production and noise reduction.

Readers may send their questions / answers to questioncorner@thehindu.co.in

What is Ladakh's demand on Gilgit-Baltistan?

Why does the Union Territory want an extended territorial control? What are the demands of the two key bodies?

Peerzada Ashiq

The story so far:

In January this year, Ladakh's two key socio-political conglomerates, the Leh Apex Body (LAB), representing several Buddhist religious and political parties, and Kargil Democratic Alliance (KDA), representing Muslim religious groups and local parties, submitted a memorandum to the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) as part of an ongoing dialogue between the Centre and the newly-carved Union Territory over a series of fresh demands from the region. These demands include extending the territorial control of Ladakh up to Gilgit-Baltistan in Pakistan Occupied Kashmir.

What is the current status of Ladakh?

Ladakh, spread over 59,146 square kilometres, was a part of the Kashmir division of the erstwhile State of Jammu and Kashmir. It was carved out as one of the Union Territories, the other being J&K, out of the State on August 5, 2019, as the Centre ended the special constitutional position of the region provided to it under Article 370. However, unlike the UT of J&K, Ladakh does not have a legislature. But it has two elected hill councils, the Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council-Kargil (LAHDC) and LAHDC-Leh. They run micro governance issues of the region with a population of 2.74 lakh (2011 census). Ladakh is a Muslim-majority UT, with the Leh district dominated by Buddhists and Kargil by Shia Muslims. The region witnessed a divided reaction to the Centre's moves to abrogate Article 370 and 35A, provisions that granted exclusive rights to locals over land, jobs and natural resources. Leh for many decades, supported the demand for UT status. However, Kargil, after the events of 2019, has been insisting on reunification with Kashmir.

> The socio-political bodies of Leh and Kargil have launched protests and started a campaign demanding restoration of Statehood with a legislature

What are the latest demands of the region?

In the past two years, both the socio-political bodies of Leh and Kargil launched street agitations, protesting against the UT status without a legislature. Both districts joined hands to launch a major campaign for the restoration of Statehood with a legislature. Earlier, Ladakh would send four members to the J&K Assembly and two members to the State's legislative council. There is also a unanimous cry for special status under the Sixth Schedule and Article 371 of the Constitution of India on the lines of Mizoram, Tripura, Sikkim and other northeastern States. People of Ladakh argue that opening up the region to outsiders and outside investment will impact "the most ecologically fragile and sensitive areas."

Ladakh also demands exclusive rights over recruitment. It has put forth a proposal to the Centre to have the Ladakh Public Service Commission for the recruitment of gazetted jobs. It also demands that the twin hill councils should have the power to recruit lower rung staff for the region. The Ladakh resident certificate should be the only basis for applying for these jobs in the region, said the key bodies of Ladakh in the memorandum.

Why extension of territorial control?

Prior to 1947, the Ladakh district also comprised the Gilgit-Baltistan area, which is now under the occupation of Pakistan. The memorandum highlights the fact and seeks extension of territorial control up to Gilgit-Baltistan. The memorandum impressed upon the Centre to make "attempts to include this area into Ladakh". It demanded reservation of seats for Gilgit-Baltistan once a legislature is granted to the region. Ladakh also shares a long but volatile Line of Actual Control (LAC) with China and saw a violent skirmish between the troops of these countries in 2020. The fresh memorandum to MHA underlines that "empowering the locals will foster stability in the region, further enhancing the foreign policy". It pointed out that the understanding of the locals of the harsh terrain of Ladakh has always proved helpful in military and logistic operations.

What is the Centre's stand?

In the wake of street protests held by people in Ladakh, the Centre in 2022 formed a committee under Minister of State G. Kishan Reddy to engage with the members of the LAB and KDA. The Centre had assured the people it would find "an appropriate solution to the issues related to language, culture and conservation of land in Ladakh." However, it has failed to arrive at a solution. After a fresh bout protests in 2023, another high-powered committee, with Minister of State Nityanand Rai at its head, was empowered to engage with the stakeholders of Ladakh. The 17-member committee included the Ladakh Lieutenant Governor and members from the KDA and LAB. In 2024, these bodies submitted a written memorandum to pave the way for more structured talks between New Delhi and Ladakh over the list of demands.

Why is Punjab in court over BSF's powers?

What led to the Punjab government moving the Supreme Court against the Centre on increasing the jurisdiction of the Border Security Force in the State? What has the top court observed in its preliminary hearing? What is the bone of contention?

Vikas Vasudeva

The story so far:

In 2021, the Government of India increased the jurisdiction of the Border Security Force (BSF) – which chiefly focus on preventing trans-border crimes – from 15 kilometres up to 50 kilometres inside the international borders in the States of Punjab, West Bengal and Assam. In Punjab, the move triggered sharp criticism from key political parties, with the State government ultimately moving the Supreme Court, which has fixed the third week of April for hearing the lawsuit.

What is the allegation?

A three-judge Bench headed by the Chief Justice of India D.Y. Chandrachud will hear a complaint filed by Punjab accusing the Centre of stripping the State and its police of its powers. Police and law and order is a State subject under Schedule 7, List-II Entries 1 and 2 of the Constitution. Punjab challenged the constitutional validity of the notification issued by the Centre in October 2021 extending the reach of the BSF to 50 km by invoking Section 139 of the Border Security Force Act, 1968. The provision authorises the Centre to confer powers and duties on the BSF with respect to any Central Act like the Passport (Entry into India) Act, 1920, the Registration of Foreigners' Act, 1939, the Central Excises and Salt Act, 1944, the Foreigners Act, 1946, the Foreign Exchange Regulation Act, 1947, the Customs Act, 1962 or the Passports Act, 1967 or of any cognizable offence punishable under any other Central Act.

> Punjab points out law and order is a State subject and the Centre's notification on the BSF infringes on its powers

Security concern: A farmer walks in his field to harvest crop close to a BSF post along the international border in Gurdaspur district of Punjab. FILE PHOTO

The court agreed to look into whether the notification amounted to an "arbitrary exercise of power" by the Centre under Section 139 and an "unconstitutional interference" into Punjab's authority.

When did the Punjab government go to the Supreme Court?

In December 2021, the Punjab government approached the Supreme Court, challenging the Centre's decision, accusing it of virtually stripping the State and its police of its powers. Earlier this week, while hearing the matter, the Supreme Court decided to examine if all border States have to be treated alike while demarcating the area of jurisdiction of the BSF. In 2021, when the Congress party was in power, it termed the decision of the Centre as a gross violation of the spirit of federalism enshrined in the Constitution. Opposing the Centre's notification on the BSF jurisdiction, which was issued on October 11, 2021, the Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) held a rally in Punjab's Amritsar as a mark of protest against the decision and asserted that it would not tolerate any dilution of the federal structure.

The Punjab State Assembly convened a special session in which the Centre's decision on enhancing the jurisdiction of BSF in Punjab was termed as "an expression of distrust and insult" towards the State police and the people of Punjab. A resolution was passed against the Centre's notification by the House rejecting the notification and demanding its withdrawal. The resolution read: "..The Union government should have consulted the State government before taking such a major decision. The law and order situation in Punjab is totally under control and there is no need to extend the jurisdiction of [the] BSF. This is a gross violation of the spirit of federalism enshrined in the Constitution of India. Extending the jurisdiction of BSF is also symbolic of petty politics..."

How has Punjab challenged the notification?

Through the lawsuit filed under Article 131 of the Constitution of India, Punjab has challenged the notification issued by the Union of India, through the Ministry of Home Affairs under sub-section (1) of Section 139 of the BSF. Punjab has submitted that the effect and the consequence of the notification amount to encroachment upon the powers of the State of Punjab by the Centre in as much as more than 80% area of the border districts. All major towns and cities including all the district headquarters of these border districts of Punjab fall within the 50 km demarcation area from the India-Pakistan International Border.

The government contends that considering that more than 80% area of the major border area towns of Punjab are covered in the extended belt of 50 kms, the notification is ultra vires of the Constitution and encroaches upon Punjab's plenary authority to legislate on the issue which relates to or are necessary for the maintenance of public order and internal peace. Also, it holds that the notification encroaches upon the power of the State as the police and law and order is a State subject. Punjab has also pointed out that power under Section 139 of the BSF Act, 1968 cannot be read in isolation to give unilateral power to the Central government to grant extra jurisdiction of 50 kms to the BSF.

What are Punjab's concerns?

The concerns of Punjab are distinguishable from the concerns of other States and Union Territories, as per the lawsuit. The geography of Punjab is such that the area which has been included in the extended jurisdiction of the BSF is densely populated. The State argues that this is not the case in Gujarat, where most of the area falls in the wastelands of Kutch and saline marshes; similarly, the extended jurisdiction in Rajasthan is desert land, permitting only sparse vegetation, and the density of population is low too. In the case of Punjab, the 50-km area is highly fertile, heavily populated and covers most of the physical areas forming part of the border districts of Pathankot, Gurdaspur, Amritsar, Tarn Taran, Ferozepur, Fazilka etc. Moreover, geographically, it points out that while Punjab is a small State, it has a very potent history and therefore, its case and concerns are different, and that no reason can justify the extension of jurisdiction to a range of 50 kms. It will inconvenience people, including farmers who have to cross barbed wire fencing to cultivate their land along the border, the State has pointed out.

What issues has the Supreme Court raised?

The Supreme Court, which has fixed the third week of April for hearing the lawsuit, has raised several issues, including whether the impugned notification constitutes an arbitrary exercise of power by the Central government and whether the increase of the jurisdiction is beyond the "local limits of areas adjoining the borders of India" under Section 139(1) of the BSF Act, 1968. Also, the court would look into whether all States have to be treated alike to determine the "local limits of areas adjoining the borders of India", and what are the factors which have to be taken into account in determining the meaning of the phrase "local limits of such area adjoining the borders of India" under Section 139(1) of the BSF Act, 1968. Besides, it would explore whether the impugned notification amounts to an unconstitutional interference in the legislative domain of the State.

Can malaria vaccine rollout be scaled up?

Which is the first country in the world to include the vaccine in routine immunisation programmes for children? What other countries are planning similar programmes? Who is manufacturing the vaccine? What should be India's strategy to eradicate malaria?

Bindu Shajan Perappadan

The story so far:

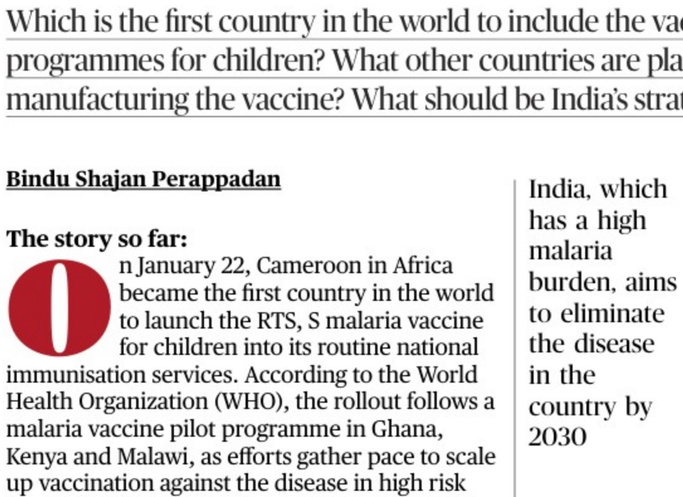
On January 22, Cameroon in Africa became the first country in the world to launch the RTS, S malaria vaccine for children into its routine national immunisation services. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), the rollout follows a malaria vaccine pilot programme in Ghana, Kenya and Malawi, as efforts gather pace to scale up vaccination against the disease in high risk areas. Twenty countries aim to roll out the programme this year, according to GAVI, the Vaccine Alliance, and other outfits which aim to provide equal access to new and underused vaccines for children living in the world's poorest countries.

Where is the malaria burden highest?

Malaria is one of the biggest killers of children under five across the world and according to WHO data, more than 30 countries have areas with moderate to high malaria transmission. Malaria is a life-threatening disease caused by parasites that are transmitted to people through the bite of the infected female Anopheles mosquito. It is preventable and curable.

In 2022, nearly half of the world's population was at risk of malaria. According to the WHO's World Malaria Report 2023, while Africa bears the highest malaria burden, accounting for 94% of cases and 95% of global malaria deaths in 2022, India in 2022, accounted for a staggering 66% of malaria cases in the WHO South-East Asia Region. India and Indonesia accounted for about 94% of all malaria deaths in the WHO South-East Asia Region. Despite a 55% reduction in cases since 2015, India remains a significant contributor to the global malaria burden. The Health Ministry said that over the past 15 years, India has made progress in reducing its malaria burden. It has a vision for a malaria-free country by 2027 and elimination by 2030.

> India, which has a high malaria burden, aims to eliminate the disease in the country by 2030



Life-saving: A nurse administers a malaria vaccine to an infant at the health centre in Datcheka, Cameroon on January 22. REUTERS

Who funds the vaccine?

The current rollout is part of a UNICEF initiative where the contract for the first-ever supply of a malaria vaccine was given to British multinational pharmaceutical and biotechnology company GSK with a value of up to $170 million, according to an official release by the organisation. This, it said, would lead to 18 million doses of the vaccine – RTS,S/AS01 – being available over the next three years. UNICEF adds that the RTS,S malaria vaccine is the result of 35 years of research and development and is the first-ever vaccine against a parasitic disease. The vaccine acts against *Plasmodium falciparum*, the most deadly malaria parasite globally. Meanwhile, the anticipated rollout of a second jab – R21 – developed by Oxford University, is expected to significantly increase the number of doses available for use. This is to be manufactured by the Serum Institute of India, which aims to make 100 million doses per year, so long as it passes the regulatory approvals following its recommendation for use by the WHO last year.

How does the dose work?

The vaccine, as per WHO, should be provided in a schedule of four doses in children from around five months of age. It further adds that a 5th dose, given one year after dose 4, may be considered in areas where there is a significant malaria risk remaining in children a year after receiving dose 4.

While India will have to wait for the vaccination to be introduced here with no date set as of now, the vaccine is currently for areas with highly seasonal malaria or areas with perennial malaria transmission with seasonal peaks; countries may consider providing the vaccine using an age-based administration, seasonal administration, or a hybrid of these approaches. WHO adds that countries should prioritise vaccination in areas of moderate and high transmission. Decisions on expanding to low transmission settings should be considered at a country level, based on the overall malaria control strategy, affordability, and programme considerations. Given this spread and the need for a vaccine, Dr. Kate O'Brien, WHO Director of the Department of Immunization, Vaccines and Biologicals, had noted that with the initial limited supply of the current vaccine "it is crucial that children living in areas where the risk of disease and need is highest are prioritised first." Efficacy of RTS,S/AS01 vaccine is modest, yet still provides significant public health benefits. The current vaccine works well with the malaria control interventions recommended by WHO including insecticide-treated bed nets, indoor residual spraying of insecticides, rapid diagnosis and treatment etc.

What are some of the challenges?

Experts say climate change emerges as a major driver, affecting malaria transmission and overall burden. Changing climate conditions enhance the sensitivity of the malaria pathogen and vector, facilitating its spread. WHO emphasises the substantial risk climate change poses to malaria progress, necessitating sustainable and resilient responses.

"The science spells it out – as the climate changes, vulnerable corners of South East Asia face a growing threat of malaria. Rising temperatures let mosquitoes spread to new turf, while warmer, more humid conditions help the parasite prosper inside the bug. Regions like eastern India, the hill tracts of Bangladesh, parts of Myanmar, and Indonesian Papua already grapple with malaria. With increased travel around the globe, infections could easily spill over into new areas," said Dr. Kaushik Sarkar, director, Institute for Health Modelling and Climate Solutions. He added that to get ahead of this, India needs to double down on ways to battle the bite, from better tracking of illnesses to making prevention and treatment more available where it's needed most.

More than a house of faith

Ayodhya Ram Temple

Prime Minister Modi says the consecration of the temple in Ayodhya marks a new era and asks those who opposed the Ram Janmabhoomi movement to 'visit the temple and experience the feeling'; but for the BJP and the Sangh, it also represented an exercise to strengthen their version of cultural nationalism

Nistula Hebbar

GETTY IMAGES

The consecration of the Ram Temple in Ayodhya was at a very basic level considered to be a closure to what had been a dispute that had dominated the politics and culture in India at least from the 1980s. The dispute, adjudicated by the Supreme Court, after years of mass mobilisation, was sought to be put to rest under the sharp sunshine of a January day in Ayodhya. The city is poised to be a pilgrimage centre, and the throng of devotees since the consecration has been in record breaking numbers.

Closure is never far from calls for new beginnings. And Prime Minister Narendra Modi's speech at the occasion spoke of a new mantra – '*Dev se desh; Ram se rashtra*' (from God to country, and from Ram to nation), a reference to bridging the divides of religion, caste, creed and region in India. The fact that the Ram Temple was built after a Supreme Court verdict was also underlined in Mr. Modi's speech, as "restoring the trust of the people in justice".

Mindful of the dispute that presaged the construction of the temple (Babri Masjid, which stood on the land, was demolished on December 6, 1992 by *kar sevaks*), he said the opening of the temple was a moment not just of '*vijay*' (victory) but also of '*vinay*' (humility), and invited those who opposed the Ram Janmabhoomi movement to "visit the temple and experience the feeling". The Ram Temple, on the date of its consecration, therefore, was already being seen as more than a house of faith by the BJP and the Sangh Parivar. The consecration was seen by many as an exercise that would establish an RSS-centric cosmology – cultural nationalism and a sacred geography in India.

The signs that this would happen were visible right at the onset when the design of the temple was finalised by the Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra Trust. A public subscription for funds for construction yielded more than the ₹1,800 crore – it was set to be the most expensive temple in India.

While built largely in the north Indian Nagara style with *Shikharas* (tower over the *sanctum sanctorum*) and not *Gopurams* (tall tower at the entrance of a temple), it also has references to the Dravidian style of temple design in the perimeter wall. The granite blocks have been sourced from Karnataka and Telangana, while pink sandstones have been sourced from Bans Paharpur in Rajasthan.

Civilisational arc

Mr. Modi's 11-day '*anushsthan*', or religious undertaking of fasts and austerity, before the consecration ceremony, took him to the Veerabhadra Temple in Lepakshi, Andhra Pradesh; the Thriprayar Sree Ramaswami Temple in Kerala; Srirangam's Sri Ranganatha Temple; and the Ramanathaswamy Temple in Rameswaram. It drew a civilisational arc around the Ramayana, encircling a sacred geography from the north to the south of India, the latter a political landscape where other ideologies have robustly challenged the BJP narrative.

These visits also tied in with Mr. Modi's ideas of a civilisational continuity between the north and the south of India, which has seen two iterations of the Kashi-Tamil sangamam (an annual month-long exchange programme aimed at reaffirming the links between Tamil Nadu and Varanasi).

By appointing as *jajmans* (those empowered to conduct sacred rituals) Kashi Domraja Anil Chaudhary, the keeper of the flame at Manikarnika Ghat in Varanasi; Mahadev Gaikwad, considered the representative of the 315 nomadic and 198 denotified tribes; and Anil Mishra, a member of the Ram Janmabhoomi Teertha Kshetra Trust, and his wife Usha Mishra for the consecration rituals, alongside Mr. Modi, subaltern political Hinduism was given full play.

The responses to the invitations issued to presidents of various political parties in India for the consecration ceremony also gave indications of the nature of politics which will inform at least the next electoral cycle. Political scientists, however, view the consecration ceremony and everything it entails in more transformational terms as the advent of India's 'Second Republic'.

"It (consecration of the Ram Temple) not only inaugurates India's 'Second Republic', it also extends the arc of a more inclusive, participatory and subalternised political Hinduism, drawing a new line – a Ram rekha– redefining the relationship between the state and religion," says Professor Ashwani Kumar of the Tata Institute of Social Sciences. "This is not a simple culmination of historically unfinished project of 'decolonisation of the Indian mind' or release from 'the slavery of the spirit'; this will potentially alter and reshape the existing caste, class and religious fault lines and redefine the westernised secularist and modernist ideals of Indian democracy, making it more humanist, nativist, vernacular, and cosmopolitan simultaneously."

'Re-renaissance' of India

Mr. Kumar terms it a "re-renaissance" of India but says it comes with its own warning labels that it should not "burn anyone". The idea that we are at the start of a 'Second Republic' is the most ambitious of the Ram Temple's expected outcomes. It was hinted at by Mr. Modi during his address on the birth anniversary of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose, celebrated as 'Parakram Diwas' on January 23.

"Over the last few years, since January 23 was declared as Parakram Divas, the significant festival of Republic Day now begins from January 23 and continues until January 30, the death anniversary of Bapu. Now, the grand spiritual festival of January 22 (consecration of Ram Temple in Ayodhya) has also been added to this celebration of Republic Day. These last few days of January are becoming highly inspiring for our spiritual and cultural consciousness, as well as our democracy and patriotism," he said. It was a clear allusion to the widening of the ambit of India's celebration of its Republic Day, to include the consecration of a place of faith.

It is no secret that the Ram Janmabhoomi movement, from the 1980s, altered the politics of India, with Mandal politics of caste identity being cited as its counter point. The scale of its consecration has, however, made it a symbol of a more fundamental change in Indian polity, a departure from the past, with few guidelines to negotiate what lies ahead.

THE GIST

- While built largely in the north Indian Nagara style with Shikharas (tower over the sanctum sanctorum) and not Gopurams (tall tower at the entrance of a temple), it also has references to the Dravidian style of temple design
- The granite stones have been sourced from Karnataka and Telangana, while pink sandstones have been sourced from Bans Paharpur in Rajasthan
- Modi observed an 11-day '*anushsthan*', or religious undertaking of fasts and austerity, and visited temples across South India ahead of the consecration ceremony

Surprise package

Shoaib Bashir

The Pakistani origin British cricketer, who is to play a Test series in India, had to fly back to England from Abu Dhabi as he faced issues in getting an Indian visa

P.K. Ajith Kumar

ILLUSTRATION: R. RAJESH

Shoaib Bashir's eyes welled up when he was told over the phone by England coach Brendon McCullum that he had been selected for the tour of India. His uncle Saj, a former wicketkeeper-batter who played a key role in his cricketing career, was overcome with emotions too, Bashir told *The Guardian*.

Saj told Bashir that he was living his dream through him. For the 20-year-old, getting selected to the England team, that too at a time when it is playing a revolutionary brand of Test cricket called Bazball – the fearless, attacking style named after McCullum's nickname Baz – must indeed have felt like a dream.

But days before Bashir was scheduled to travel to India for the five-match Test series, that dream turned into a nightmare. He was stranded in Abu Dhabi, while the rest of the squad and the support staff boarded the plane to India.

Preparatory camp

The England team had chosen to do a preparatory camp in the Gulf nation rather than India, where it was scheduled to play the first Test without even one warm-up match. But that is not unusual during these days of non-stop cricket, with multi-formats and franchise-based leagues around the world.

Bashir was forced to stay back in Abu Dhabi because his visa application had not been approved yet, while that of everyone else was. The issue was his Pakistani origin.

It was not the first time a cricketer of Pakistani origin was having issues in getting the Indian visa. Last year, Australia's batter Usman Khawaja, who was born in Islamabad, could travel to India only after his 17 teammates did, for the Test series.

Before that, England all-rounder Moeen Ali had to miss the first match of Chennai Super Kings in the IPL in 2022. Another England player Saqib Mahmood had to be withdrawn from the England Lions – the developmental team, like India-A – in 2019 after he failed to get his visa in time.

As England captain Ben Stokes pointed out, Bashir had been announced as a member of the squad to tour India on December 11. That is early enough for a sportsman to get a visa to play what is a high-profile international event, regardless of the country of his origin.

Bashir was born in the town of Chertsey near London to Pakistani parents. His family too was keen that he had a career in cricket and his mother would accompany him to Rajasthan Royals' academy in Surrey, where he would gladly put in hours of practice, according to his coach. He had made an impression on the Australian spin legend Shane Warne.

But Surrey, his home county, was not impressed enough to keep him, though he had played for the age-group sides. When the county let him go, Bashir considered studying finance at a university.

Professional contact

But, his performances for Berkshire County Cricket Club – not among the bigger ones in England – caught the attention of Somerset, which gave him a professional contract. His plans for a university degree could perhaps wait.

Last October, he made it to the England Lions squad for a tour of the UAE, where he took six wickets in his first match, against Afghanistan-A. Two months later, he became the surprise package in the England team for the Indian tour. The selectors and team management surely must have seen beyond something more than his ordinary record – 10 wickets from six First Class matches at an average of 67 – in the tall spinner to pick him ahead of more experienced players.

They may not have, however, foreseen that he would not get his visa in time to catch the flight to Hyderabad, where the first Test was scheduled to start on January 25. Bashir instead had to fly back to England in order to get his passport stamped by the Indian High Commission.

The incident understandably upset the England team. Its captain Ben Stokes said he was devastated that Bashir had to go through all that.

The incident made headlines in England, of course. Former England cricketer David Lloyd said the team should delay the start of the first Test until Bashir's arrival. A spokesperson for Prime Minister Rishi Sunak's office said the U.K. expected India to treat British citizens fairly at all times in the visa process and the issue of those with Pakistani origin had been raised with the Indian High Commission in London.

Bashir has since got his visa and is expected to land in India soon. He should have been able to come sooner.

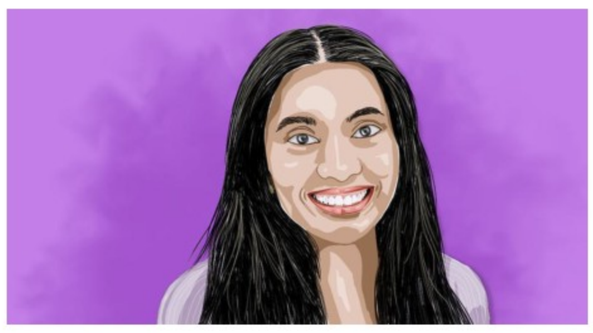
Crusader for AI regulation

Sneha Revanur

The 18-year-old Indian American is spearheading a youth activist group pushing for a human-centred approach to artificial intelligence

Nabeel Ahmed

ILLUSTRATION: SREEJITH R. KUMAR



In a year when rapid developments in artificial intelligence dominated headlines, an 18-year-old activist made it to the list of *Time* magazine's list of 100 most influential people. She calls for a "human-centered" approach to AI.

Sneha Revanur, an Indian American, became an active participant in shaping AI policy when she founded Encode Justice, a civil society group. In her blog, Ms. Revanur describes the group as a "youth-powered organisation leading a global movement for human rights and justice under AI through political advocacy, community organising, educational programming, and content creation".

The group has close to 900 active members across 30 countries and draws inspiration from earlier youth-led climate and gun-control movements. Every member of the group is either in high school or college. Ms. Renavur is advocating for the active participation of Gen Z, typically those born between 1997 and 2012, in the formation of a legal framework to regulate AI.

Her efforts have resulted in her being invited to attend a roundtable discussion on AI hosted by U.S. Vice President Kamala Harris. She is also involved in a project released by the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) in 2022. Her role in the project involved advising the OSTP on crafting a framework for AI.

Though a mere blueprint and not enforceable, the framework, released in 2023, became one of the first frameworks aimed at regulating the use and development of AI.

A small start

Seen as the Greta Thunberg of AI, Ms. Revanur's journey began at a young age. She once said her upbringing in Silicon Valley and her family background and association with the tech world helped shape her convictions and the formation of Encode Justice. Ms. Revanur's older sister works in tech and both her parents are software engineers.

In 2020, Ms. Revanur, then 15, founded Encode Justice to mobilise the youth in her home State of California. The group was formed to oppose the initiative to replace cash bail with a risk-based algorithm. If the initiative, Proposition 25, had been approved by voters in the State, it would bring an end to cash bail in favour of risk assessment algorithms that would measure a person's likelihood of re-offending or skipping out on the court.

Ms. Revanur says the problem with the initiative lay in algorithm tools similar to the one being used by the justice system in the U.S. This algorithm was found to have staggering rates of racial bias in an investigation conducted by *ProPublica*.

Once the initiative was defeated, the group continued its work on educating and mobilising peers around AI policies.

Ms. Revanur believes the release of the framework around AI is a great starting point, and there is a lot of work that has to be done to ensure that future regulations have more teeth. Her organisation's goal, she says, is not to stop technology or to put an end to innovation. Instead, it aims "to re-imagine what exists and to build justice into the framework of the existing systems from the beginning".

Ms. Revanur believes that since her generation was quick to adopt generative AI tools like ChatGPT, and will inherit the impacts of the technology, it makes sense for them to have a say in regulating it.

To further youth participation in AI regulations, her group sent an open letter to the U.S. Congress on AI policy. The letter demanded, among other things, the creation of governance structures to audit AI products and manage risks. It also recommended the setting up of an independent FDA-style regulatory agency to assess the impact of AI while simultaneously stressing a proactive approach to corporate accountability.

Ms. Revanur believes AI should be designed to align with human values, meet human needs, and be accountable to human stakeholders. While advocating for close human oversight aimed at keeping its development in check, she says close intergovernmental coordination is going to be crucial in setting up a regulatory framework for AI.

Encode Justice is supported by multiple investment funds such as the Omidyar Network, We Are Family Foundation, America's Promise Alliance, the Princeton Prize in Race Relations, and individual donors. Ms. Revanur continues her activism while pursuing her education. Because, Ms. Revanur says, she and her comrades realise that their collective future depends on it.

INBRIEF

Yes Bank Q3 PAT grows over threefold on lesser provisions

Yes Bank reported third-quarter net profit grew more than threefold to ₹231 crore for the period ended December 31, 2023, as compared with ₹52 crore in the year-earlier period, aided by lesser provisions. The bank reported net interest income of ₹2,017 crore compared with ₹1,971 crore in the year earlier. Provisions were lower at ₹555 crore as compared with ₹845 crore in the year earlier. Gross slippages were lower at ₹1,233 crore as compared with ₹1,610 crore last year.

APAC companies ramping up investments in GenAI: Infosys

Companies across Asia-Pacific (APAC) are ramping up investments in generative AI (GenAI) and entering a higher stage of maturity, Infosys Knowledge Institute (IKI), the research arm of Infosys, said in a study. While enterprises in the APAC region are spending less than their North American counterparts on GenAI, IKI forecasts the biggest spending increase globally in the next year at 140% in APAC, which would total to about $3.4 billion in investments across the region.

China told U.S. officials its banks 'doing well', Yellen says

U.S. Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen said on Friday that Treasury officials visiting Beijing recently received assurances that Chinese banks are "doing well" despite turmoil in the country's financial and real estate markets, adding that she did not see large spillovers to the U.S. economy at this stage. She told reporters that a U.S.-China Economic Working Group would meet in Beijing shortly for larger discussions on China's economic situation. REUTERS

'Collaboration is a must for India to reach $5 tn in GDP'

Many initiatives taken by Customs, like faceless assessment, direct port delivery, single window clearance, AEO scheme must evolve aiming to grow trade, says Finance Minister Sitharaman

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

Aiming high: Special focus on MSMEs, new start-ups and inclusivity would align with the vision of the PM, Ms. Sitharaman said. PTI

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Saturday said initiatives of Customs department like Faceless Assessment and Single Window Clearance must evolve aiming to grow trade as every partner must collaborate to help India's GDP surpass $5 trillion by 2027-28.

In a written message on 'International Customs Day 2024', Ms. Sitharaman said with a common purpose of ease of doing business for nation building, all stakeholders must come together and contribute to benefit the citizens.

She said this year's theme of International Customs Day which is "Customs Engaging Traditional and New Partners with Purpose" resonates with the motto of 'Sabka Saath Sabka Vikas' given by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

"Every partner needs to collaborate to put India on course to becoming the third-largest economy by 2027-28, with a GDP surpassing $5 trillion," Ms. Sitharaman said.

Many initiatives taken by Customs like Faceless Assessment, Direct Port Delivery, Single Window Clearance, AEO Scheme must evolve aiming to grow trade and business, the minister added.

Special focus on MSMEs, new start-ups and inclusivity would align with the vision of the PM, Ms. Sitharaman said.

Govt. working on SEZ reforms: Commerce Secretary Barthwal

Press Trust of India
KOLKATA

The Centre is working on reforms in the Special Economic Zone (SEZ) domain so that movement of goods between domestic tariff area (DTA) and SEZ space is carried out smoothly without affecting the competitiveness of goods in the export markets, Commerce Secretary Sunil Barthwal said on Saturday.

During the pandemic two years ago, many office spaces in the SEZ areas had been vacated due to 'work from home' practice initiated by the occupants.

Mr. Barthwal said this had led to the demarcation of the SEZs into SEZ and DTA spaces.

"Scale economies have become very important nowadays. Reforms in the SEZ are in the offing so that movement of goods from SEZ to DTA and vice-versa are not affected rendering goods produced becoming less competitive," Mr. Barthwal said at a symposium organised by Bharat Chamber of Commerce.

He said the foreign trade policy (FTP) had been framed keeping in mind the global value chain.

"The industry, which had always sought protection in the past, will now have to integrate with the global value chain and look at where the competitive advantage lay," he added.

Kinetic Green expects bookings for electric Luna to touch 1 lakh

N. Anand
CHENNAI

The company plans to come up with a monthly EMI scheme of ₹2,000-2,500 for 30-36 months

Kinetic Green Energy and Power Solutions Ltd. (Kinetic Green) is hopeful of recreating a buzz in the electric two-wheeler segment with the unveiling of its iconic moped Luna, said co-founder and executive director Ritesh Mantri.

"While everyone is looking at e-versions of their scooters upwards of 100cc, we have made a smart move of looking at the entry level segment," he said during an interaction.

Kinetic Green commenced online bookings for the eLuna on January 26 with a token advance of ₹500.

"We are hopeful of getting one lakh bookings by March 31. On a full charge, it will offer a mileage of 80-100 km. If the payload is 150 kg, it should be about 80 km," he said.

"The price of eLuna will be announced soon. It is India's first affordable hi-speed multi-utility vehicle. To make it more affordable, we are coming out with an EMI scheme of ₹2,000-2,500 per month for 30-36 months," said founder and CEO Sulajja Firodia Motwani.

"The batteries are going to be made inhouse. We are offering the eLuna with Li-ion battery with three years warranty in three variants - chargeable, removeable and swappable," she said.

The company plans to retain its famous tagline 'Chal Meri Luna'.

Farm loan disbursement touches 90% of Budget target in 9 months

Shishir Sinha
NEW DELHI

Disbursal of farm loans has exceeded 90% of the Budget estimate in the first nine months of the current fiscal, data from the Finance Ministry showed. Given this trend, the Interim Budget may see an increase of at least 10% in the estimates for the next fiscal (2024-25).

The Ministry said as on December 31, 2023, a little over ₹18 lakh crore, which is 90% of the target, had been disbursed.

"Further, credit disbursed to the Animal Husbandry and Fisheries sector during FY 2023-24 at ₹1,91,412 crore, was 65% of the target of ₹2.93 lakh crore," the Ministry said, while talking about delivery on Budget promises. The disbursements include over ₹77,000 crore as working capital, and over ₹1.13 lakh crore as term loan. According to the Financial Services Department in the Finance Ministry, agricultural credit had surged nearly three times from ₹7.3 lakh crore in FY 2013-14 to ₹21.55 lakh crore in FY 2022-23.

The Kisan Credit Card (KCC) scheme has played a pivotal role in providing timely and hassle-free credit to farmers, with over 7.36 crore operative KCC accounts at the end of 2023.

(The writer is with The Hindu businessline)

Eicher to roll out LNG variant of heavy duty trucks in a year

N. Anand
CHENNAI

Though LNG technology is ready, there are not enough fuel stations in the country, the MD said

Eicher Trucks and Buses, a business unit of VE Commercial Vehicles Ltd., (VECV) is gearing up to unveil LNG variants of heavy duty trucks in a year's time, said Managing Director & CEO Vinod Aggarwal.

"We had rolled out CNG powered light and medium duty trucks. But they are not economical for the long haul segment," he said during an interaction.

"LNGs are best suited for long haul and heavy duty trucks and tractors. We are ready with the technology. But there are not enough fuel stations in the country," he added.

The company would roll out the trucks as and when the infrastructure was in place, he said, adding that these would be offered in the 19-55 ton category in a year's time.

"Electric versions of small trucks and buses have already been rolled out. It would take some time for us to electrify heavy duty trucks," said Heavy Duty Trucks Senior Vice President Gagandeep Singh Gandhok.

Compass unit targets fivefold growth in next 5 years, says MD

Lalatendu Mishra
MUMBAI

Vikas Chawla

Compass Group India, a unit of British multinational Compass Group Plc and a provider of contract food and support services to companies, educational institutions and hospitals, said it aims to grow its support services business fivefold in the next five years, said its chief executive.

The company has chalked out plans to expand its services in the manufacturing sector, which has got a leg-up from the Centre's 'Make in India' initiative.

"Compass Group India targets a substantial growth rate of 45% in the next three years," CEO & MD Vikas Chawla said in an interview. "Our goal is to scale our offerings by as much as 10 times in the upcoming 5-7 years," he said.

"Our objective is not just to enter the market, but to make a significant impact that exceeds the set benchmarks while aligning with our clients' needs," the CEO added.

'HP to offer AI PCs in India by mid 2024, will transform market'

Mini Tejaswi
BENGALURU

Ipsita Dasgupta

Hewlett-Packard (HP), makers of personal computers (PCs), printers and 3D printing solutions, said it would launch its first artificial intelligence (AI) capable PC model globally by mid calendar 2024.

AI PCs would be game changers in the personal computing space, and HP is currently working closely with its silicon and software partners and other ecosystem players globally to redesign PC architecture for AI compatibility, the company said.

"In mid calendar 2024, we will launch our first AI-capable PCs that will enable users to run large language models (LLMs) locally, eliminating the need to upload private data to a cloud-based processor, minimising processing latency, and decreasing the cost of AI processing," said Ipsita Dasgupta, MD and Senior VP for India, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka at HP.

Ms. Dasgupta claimed AI PCs would transform user experience by simplifying tasks and enhancing usability for various aspects of life and work. For instance, AI PCs will enable game developers automate tasks, designers iterate on sketches, data scientists benefit from faster data processing and overall these devices would help optimise workflows, improve productivity, and capabilities for a wide range of professionals.

She said Generative AI had been working in the background for some years now. With AI PC, "it will be truly like having a trusted personal companion who will carry out a lot of mundane tasks, that still require time and smartness to accomplish, and therefore the users of AI PC can focus on core activities and enhance their output with better efficiency and timing," Ms. Dasgupta added.

Commenting on India's PC market Ms. Dasgupta said, "After two years of strong growth in the COVID years, we saw a softening in demand in 2023. However, it was higher than 50% of pre-COVID levels."

On average, PC makers led by HP, Dell, Lenovo and Acer sell 16-20 million units a year in India. As per International Data Corporation, a U.S.-based PC market tracker, India's PC sales in third quarter CY 2023 was 4.5 million.

SOUTH WESTERN RAILWAY G20
Tender Notice No. CAO/CN/BNC/100/2024
Dated: 23-01-2024
The undersigned, on behalf of the President of India, invites E-tenders for the following work.

Item of Work	Appx. Value
Collection supply and stacking of machine crushed hard, durable, graded angular, cubical graded stone ballast conforming to Railway specifications from Km. 210.500 to Km.257.600 between Shahapur and Wadi Stations including Shahpur, Sirwal, Biral Buzurg, Narboli station yards. (Tender Ref. No.GDG-WD-55)	Rs. 22,62,53,081/-

Last date for submission of bids: Up to 15:00 hrs. of 14.02.2024
For details log on: www.ireps.gov.in
Deputy Chief Engineer / Construction Works / Bengaluru Cantonment
PUB/654/AAV/PRB/SWR/2023-24
South Western Railway-SWR SWRRLY SWRRLY

SOUTH WESTERN RAILWAY G20
E-Tender Notice No: Y/E.29/2023-24/68
Dated : 18-01-2024
The undersigned, on behalf of the President of India, invites E-Tenders for the following work.

Name of the Work	Approx. Value
(Re-tender) 1) Provision and Improvement by generating Solar Power for water pumping equipment at 10 Locations over Mysuru Division. and 2) Provision of Solar pumps at various locations over Mysuru Division.	Rs. 89,68,360/-

Last date for submission of bids: Upto 11:00 Hrs. on 09-02-2024
For details log on: www.ireps.gov.in
Senior Divisional Electrical Engineer Mysuru
PUB/642/AAS/PRB/SWR/2023-24
South Western Railway - SWR SWRRLY SWRRLY

SOUTH WESTERN RAILWAY G20
Tender Notice No. 01/SBC/24
Dated: 19-01-2024
The undersigned, on behalf of the President of India, invites E-tenders for the following work.

Item of Work	Appx. Value
KSR Bengaluru: Construction of Quarters and Conversion of rooms to Officers Rest House in KSR Bengaluru area. Maintenance period is 12months.	Rs. 6,73,67,081/-

Last date for submission of bids: Up to 15:00 hrs. of 12.02.2024
For details log on: www.ireps.gov.in
Senior Divisional Engineer / Co-Ord Bengaluru
PUB/655/AAV/PRB/SWR/2023-24
South Western Railway-SWR SWRRLY SWRRLY

PUBLIC NOTICE
Sri. Shreyas K.S, Aged 33 years,S/o. Sri. Sampath K.T and Smt. Bhagyalakshmi and **Smt. Manvitha K.R,** Aged 32 years, W/o. Shreyas K.S, Both are residing at First Floor 02, Passion Paradise 45,1st Main, 1st Block, Thyagarajanagar, Bangalore- 560 028, intend to purchase the Schedule Property from **Sri.G. Ramesh,** Aged 59 years,S/o. Sri. H Govindaiah,Residing at No.124, Flat No. P1, 3rd Main Road, Mahalakshmipuram Further Extension, Opp Iskon Temple, Bangalore-560 086. The Seller came into the possession, occupation and ownership of the Schedule property by virtue of a registered document bearing No. RJN-1-00629-2010-11, Book-I, stored in CD no. RJND145 dated 21.05.2010, registered in the office of the Sub-Registrar, Rajajinagar, Bangalore. Any person/s claimingto have any charge, lien, interest, minor claims, rights, whatsoever over the Schedule Property may lodge their claim with the undersigned with original documentary proof within **10 days** from the date of publication of this notice, failing which, our clients will treat that there are no objections orclaims in respect of the Schedule Property. No claims will be entertained thereafter and our clients will proceed with the sale transaction.
SCHEDULE 'A' PROPERTY
All that piece and parcel of **Residential Site bearing no 124, 3rd Main, situated at Mahalakshmipura further Extension under Dollars scheme and presently under** Bangalore Mahanagara Palike, Banaglore and measuring
East by : Site No.125
west by : Site No. 123
North by : Site No. 211
South by : Road
SCHEDULE 'B' PROPERTY
An undivided share, right, title and interest in the Schedule A Property measuring to an extent of 444.44 Sq. ft
SCHEDULE 'C' PROPERTY
Three Bed Room Apartment bearing No. G-2, on the Ground Floor, measuring 1365.20 Square feet of Super built-up area, (which is inclusive of the floors, Ceiling and walls between the apartments and proportionate share in all common areas) together with Car parking space in the cellar and bounded on:
East by : Site Bearing No.125
west by : Site bearing No.123
North by : Site bearing No.211
South by : Flat No. G1
Building Specifications: RCC roofing , granite flooring , teak wood main door, still and wooden windows.
Pallavi.K ADVOCATE
No.64/1, 5th Main Road, Chamarajapete, Bangalore-560 018 Ph:9739831357

SOUTHERN RAILWAY
Chennai Division
No. M-TRD-29-I-0T-2023-24-26R,39,40 Dt: 25.01.2024
For and on behalf of the President of India, the Divisional Railway Manager/Traction distribution Branch, Chennai Division, S. Railway, Chennai 3. invites online tender from the experienced Contractors for the following works for further details, please refer to **www.ireps.gov.in**

Sl. No.	Tender No. / Name of the work	Value (Rs.)	Closing date/time
1.	M-TRD-29-I-0T-2023-24-26R Provision of Power Quality Restorer for AC traction system at Chintadripet (MCPT Traction Sub Station for current and voltage harmonic suppression and higher power factor	4,34,00,000/-	22/02/2024 (15:00 hrs)
2.	M-TRD-29-I-0T-2023-24-39 Modification to existing OHE arrangements in connection Upgradation of Wagon Maintenance infrastructure at TNPM Yard	32,79,494.84	20/02/2024 (15:00 hrs)
3.	M-TRD-29-I-0T-2023-24-40 Replacement of 65 sq mm Catenary Wire in MAS-GDR section of Chennai Division	1,67,27,700	20/02/2024 (15:00 hrs)

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PUBLIC NOTICE
The General public is hereby informed that my client is intending to purchase property bearing House List Khatha No. 322/2, BBMP Khatha No.220-322/2, situated at Thubarahalli Village, Varthur Hobli, Bangalore East Taluk presently within the limits of BBMP, Bangalore measuring East to West 63.3+85.4/2 feet and North to South 135.32 +128.3/2 Feet totally measuring 9800 Square Feet from its owners Sri. V. RAVINDRA AND SRI V. AMBARISH
If anybody is having any objection, claim, interest, dispute for the above intended sale transaction, he/she/they may contact the undersigned documentary proof substantiating with his/her/their objections/claims/details of dispute/s within Seven **(7) days** from the date of this publication, failing which, my client will proceed to complete the sale transaction with the above owners as if there are no third party interest /claims /objections /disputes in respect of the Schedule Property and thereafter no claims/objections/disputes will be entertained.
SCHEDULE PROPERTY
All that piece and parcel of House List Khatha No. 322/2, BBMP Khatha No. 220-322/2, situated at Thubarahalli Village, Varthur Hobli, Bangalore East Taluk presently within the limits of BBMP, Bangalore measuring East to West 63.3+85.4/2 feet and North to South 135.32 +128.3/2 Feet totally measuring 9800 Square Feet and bounded on: **East by:** Road, **West by**: Road and Remaining Property No.70, **North by:** Private Property, **South by:** Pullappa and Srinivas's Property,
Sd/- **SHIVA SHANKAR .C,** Advocate No.45, 1st Floor, Near Shree Sai Gold Palace, DVG Road, Basavanagudi, Bangalore-560004. Mob:6361300825
Date: 25-01-2024

SOUTHERN RAILWAY
CORRIGENDUM
In partial modification of the notice inviting open tender No. NMRT/01/2024 dated 19.01. 2024 published on 21.01.2024 the NIT stand corrected and be read as follows.
Notice Inviting Open E-tender
Commercial Branch, Headquarters Office
Tender No. NMRT/01/2024 Dated 19.01.2024.
For and on behalf of The President of India, acting through the Principal Chief Commercial Manager, Commercial Branch, Head Quarters, Southern Railway, Park town, Chennai-3 invites e-tender for the following work:

1.	Name of the work and its location	For operation of tourism based Nilgiri Mountain Train for a period of three years under two packet system
2.	Estimated cost of the work	Rs.1,85,44,475 Excl GST (Per annum 52 trips)
3.	Completion Period of work	Three years from the date of commencement of operation
4.	Type of Tender	Two packet open e-Tender.
5.	Date of Pre-bid meeting	31.01.2024 at 11.00 Hrs Sulekha conference hall, 2nd floor at Southern Railway Headquarters office
6.	Earnest Money to be Deposited	Rs.2,42,800/-
7.	Date and Time of Closing of Tender	Upto 15.00 Hrs of 09.02.2024
8.	Date and Time of opening of Tender	15.30 Hrs on 09.02.2024
9.	Website particulars	www.ireps.gov.in

Follow us on : twitter.com/GMSRailways

NORTH WESTERN RAILWAY G20
(Survey & Construction)
Open E-Tender Notice (Two Packet System)
Dy. Chief Engineer (Construction)-IV, North Western Railway, Nirman Bhawan, Near Railway Samudayik Bhawan, Jagatpura, Jaipur - 302 017 for and on behalf of the President of India invites Open E-Tender. Tenderer shall on-line submit their original/revised offer before the date and time of closing of E-tender. **1. E-Tender Notice No. :** NWR/SC/Civil-102140529 **2. Name of work with location.:** Supplying and stacking machine crushed stone ballast in stacks in station yards or on cess/finished formation including station yards along the track at stations between Rewari & Kathuwas in connection with Rewari-Kathuwas Doubling Project and Rewari-Sadulpur in connection with Rewari-Sadulpur bypass line project of North Western Railway **3. Approximate cost of work. :** Rs. 12,90,18,783.67 **4. Earnest Money to be deposited :** Rs. 7,95,100.00 **5. Completion Period :** 12 (Twelve) months **6. Closing Date & Time of submission of On line E-tender :** Up to 15.00 Hrs. on 16.02.2024 **7. Website particulars where complete details of E-Tender can be seen :** Tender can be seen at Web site **www.ireps.gov.in** under the unit of DY. CE[C]IV-JP **8.Official E-mail Address : Dycec4jp@gmail.com Note** : **1** No manual tender will be accepted. **2** Bid security should be in proper form. Bid security should be submitted by the tenderer only through net banking or payment GATEWAY/ or in form of BG in favour of FA&CAO/Construction, North Western Railway, Jaipur **98-DG/24**
Please join us on /NWRailways NWRailways_

MANILA

Nine Islamist militants killed in Philippine clash, says Army

AP

Nine Islamist militants including three suspects in a Catholic mass bombing in southern Philippines last month have been killed in a clash with troops, the military said on Saturday. Army soldiers battled 15 Dawlah Islamiyah suspects in Piagapo on Thursday. The firefight left nine gunmen dead and four soldiers wounded. AFP

FUNAFUTI

Tuvalu's pro-Taiwan Prime Minister loses seat in election

AFP

Tuvalu's pro-Taiwan Prime Minister Kausea Natano lost his parliamentary seat, results showed on Saturday, and the microstate may be poised to switch diplomatic recognition to Beijing. There are a little more than 6,000 voters in the country of around 11,500, and ballots are still coming in from far-flung islands. AFP

ISLAMABAD

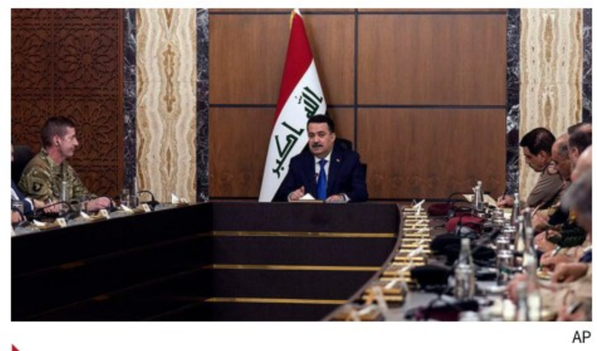
Cash-strapped Pakistan seeks $2-billion loan from China

AFP

Cash-strapped Pakistan has sought financial assistance of $2 billion from China for a year, according to a media report on Saturday. Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaarul Haq Kakar, in a letter, requested Chinese Premier Li Qiang to roll over the debt as soon as the deposit time for the loan from China is completed on March 23. PTI

BAGHDAD

Washington, Baghdad open talks on the role of foreign troops in Iraq



AP

Iraq and the U.S. on Saturday held a "first round" of talks on the future of American and other foreign troops in the country, with Baghdad expecting discussions to lead to a timeline for reducing their presence. There are 2,500 U.S. troops deployed in Iraq and about 900 in Syria as part of the anti-IS coalition formed in 2014. AFP

3 Palestinians killed in Israeli airstrike in south Gaza

Associated Press
RAFAH

Two women and a man were killed early on Saturday in what witnesses said was an Israeli airstrike on a home in the southernmost part of Gaza.

The strike came less than a day after the International Court of Justice ordered Israel to do all it can to prevent death, destruction and any acts of genocide in Gaza. As part of its binding ruling, the top UN court asked Israel for a compliance report in a month.

The court stopped short of ordering a ceasefire, but the orders its judges issued were in part a stinging rebuke of the Army's conduct so far in Israel's nearly four-month-long war against Gaza's Hamas rulers. Friday's decision came in a case brought by South Africa.

Britain, Italy, Finland pause funding for UN agency in Gaza

Israel says 12 employees of UNRWA, which provides aid to Gazans, involved in October 7 attacks; Palestinian Authority slams Western nations over decision, says move comes with multiple risks

Reuters
LONDON

Britain, Italy and Finland on Saturday became the latest countries to pause funding for the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestinians (UNRWA), following allegations that its staff were involved in the October 7 Hamas attacks on Israel.

Set up to help refugees of the 1948 war at Israel's founding, the UNRWA provides education, health and aid services to Palestinians in Gaza, the West Bank, Jordan, Syria, and Lebanon. It helps about two thirds of Gaza's 2.3 million population and has played a pivotal aid role during the current war.

The U.S., Australia and Canada had already paused funding to the aid agency after Israel said 12 UNRWA employees were involved in the cross-border attack. The agency has opened an investigation into several employees severed ties with them.

Last straw: Children rest as Palestinians fleeing Khan Younis move towards Rafah in the southern Gaza Strip on Saturday. REUTERS

The Palestinian Foreign Ministry criticised what it described as an Israeli campaign against UNRWA, and the Hamas militant group condemned the termination of employee contracts "based on information derived from the Zionist enemy".

The U.K. Foreign Office said it was temporarily pausing funding for UNRWA while the accusations were reviewed and noted London had condemned the October 7 attacks as "heinous" terrorism.

"The Italian government has suspended financing of the UNRWA after the atrocious attack on Israel on October 7," Foreign Minister Antonio Tajani said on social media platform X. Finland also said it suspended funding.

Hussein al-Sheikh, head of the Palestinians' umbrella political body the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), said cutting support brought major political and relief risks.

"We call on countries that announced the cessation of their support for UNRWA to immediately reverse their decision," he said on X.

U.S. strikes Houthi target in Yemen after attack on oil tanker

Agence France-Presse
SANAA

U.S. CENTCOM says its forces struck and destroyed a Houthi anti-ship missile 'in self-defence'

U.S. forces struck an anti-ship missile in Houthi-held Yemen that they said was ready to fire on Saturday, hours after the Iran-backed rebels caused a fire on a British tanker in the Gulf of Aden with a similar munition.

U.S. and British forces have launched joint strikes aimed at reducing the Houthis' ability to target vessels transiting the key Red Sea trade route – attacks the rebels say are in support of Palestinians in the Gaza Strip, where Israel is at war with Hamas.

Washington has also carried out a series of unilateral air raids, but the Houthis have vowed to continue their attacks.

The U.S. military's Central Command, CENTCOM, said it had carried out another strike early on Saturday on a Houthi "anti-ship missile aimed into the Red Sea and which was prepared to launch. Forces subsequently struck and destroyed the missile in self-defence".

The Houthis' Al-Masirah television said the U.S. and the U.K. launched two air strikes on the port of Ras Issa in Yemen's Hodeida province, which hosts the country's main oil export terminal. The previous evening, the Houthis' military spokesman Yahya Saree said missiles fired by the rebels had hit the *Marlin Luanda*, an oil tanker operated by a British firm on behalf of trading giant Trafigura Group.

Bangkok talks were 'candid, substantive', say China, U.S.

Agence France-Presse
BAGHDAD

China and the U.S. said on Saturday that top diplomat Wang Yi and U.S. National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan held "candid, substantive" talks in Thailand's capital Bangkok, with the issue of Taiwan central after recent elections there.

Mr. Wang and Mr. Sullivan "had candid, substantive and fruitful strategic communication on implementing the consensus reached at the San Francisco meeting... and on properly handling important and sensitive issues in China-U.S. relations", a statement on China's Foreign Ministry website released on Saturday evening said.

The two sides will work to set up a call between Mr. Xi and Mr. Biden, the White House said in a statement, to pursue "high-level diplomacy".

Jury orders Trump to pay $83 million for defamation

Agence France-Presse
NEW YORK

A jury in New York ordered former U.S. President and 2024 candidate Donald Trump on Friday to pay $83.3 million to compensate the writer E. Jean Carroll, whom he was found to have sexually assaulted and defamed.

The civil order, which prompted an audible gasp in the federal court, far exceeds the more than $10 million in damages for defamation that Ms. Carroll had sought. Mr. Trump lashed out almost immediately, calling the verdict "ridiculous" in a statement and promising to appeal.

The jury reached its decision after slightly less than three hours of deliberations.

Donald Trump

Mr. Trump had been in court earlier, but was not in court when the level of compensatory and punitive damages were read out by a court clerk.

"This is a great victory for every woman who stands up when she's been knocked down, and a huge defeat for every bully who has tried to keep a woman down," Ms. Carroll said in a statement.

A juror exchanged a smile with Ms. Carroll as the nine men and women left the courtroom after the judge encouraged them to protect their privacy.

"It's clear to me... you paid attention," Judge Lewis Kaplan told the jury following the verdict.

The order was comprised of $65 million in punitive damages after the jury found Mr. Trump acted maliciously in his many public comments about Ms. Carroll, $7.3 million in compensatory damages and $11 million for a reputational repair programme.

Girl power

Women march in Nairobi against the cases of femicide in Kenya on Saturday. At least 16 women have been killed in the country this year. AP

Washington approves sale of F-16 jets to Turkiye

Agence France-Presse
WASHINGTON

Ending months of negotiations, the U.S. government on Friday approved a $23 billion deal to sell F-16 warplanes to Turkiye, after Ankara ratified Sweden's NATO membership, the State Department said.

As required by U.S. law, the State Department notified Congress of the agreement, as well as a separate $8.6 billion sale of 40 F-35s to Greece. Turkiye will get 40 new F-16s and upgrades to 79 of the jets in its existing fleet, the State Department said in a news release.

The U.S. did not green light the transaction until Turkiye's instruments of ratification of Sweden's membership had arrived in Washington, a U.S. official said, highlighting the highly sensitive nature of the negotiations.

All instruments of ratification must be deposited in the U.S. capital – a city NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg will visit next week, and which will host a summit in July to mark the 75th anniversary of the trans-Atlantic alliance.

Turkiye's Parliament ratified Sweden's NATO membership on Tuesday after a year of delays that upset Western efforts to show resolve in the face of Russia's war on Ukraine. President Recep Tayyip Erdogan initially objected to Sweden's NATO bid over Stockholm's perceived acceptance of Kurdish groups that Ankara views as "terrorist" outfits.

Former PM Imran Khan, party erased from poll campaign in Pak.

Agence France-Presse
MIANWALI

Pakistani cricketing legend-turned-leader Imran Khan is wildly popular in his constituency and ancestral homeland of Mianwali, but the political posters that line the streets do not bear his face and flags do not fly his colours.

A relentless crackdown widely attributed to Pakistan's powerful military has seen him and his Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party almost erased from the election campaign ahead of the vote.

"Our party workers are facing harassment, and I personally have received death threats," says 61-year-old Jamal Ahsan Khan, who is standing for the PTI in Mianwali in place of his leader.

Missing face: A campaign poster of an Independent candidate on display in Imran Khan's native town of Mianwali. AFP

"Throughout my life, I have never witnessed an election as intense and threatening as this one."

Mr. Khan, currently in jail facing dozens of legal challenges, is barred from contesting elections on February 8 because of a graft conviction – cases he claims are politically motivated. Across the country, the PTI has been obstructed from holding rallies and the heavily censored media is restricted in its coverage of the opposition, pushing the party's campaign almost entirely online.

Dozens of candidates nationwide have also had their nomination papers rejected by the electoral commission.

Like many other party candidates, loyalist Ahsan Khan has been in near hiding in the build-up to the election, unable to hold meetings or distribute leaflets. "It feels disheartening that as a candidate of Pakistan's leading political party, I am unable to conduct my campaign in a meaningful way," he said.

'He is a hero'

It was from Mianwali, a largely rural district in the central province of Punjab, that Mr. Khan built his political career and was elected three times as MP.

In Mianwali, where he notably built a hospital and a university, the 71-year-old "is not just a political figure, he is a hero", Rana Amjad Iqbal, editor-in-chief of local newspaper *Nawa-e-Sharar*, or the *Daily Spark*, said.

"However, the primary and most significant reason for his enduring political relevance lies in his anti-establishment stance," underlines the journalist.

Mr. Khan was widely believed to have been backed by the military in his rise to power, but became emboldened during his leadership and began to push against the control of the mighty Generals.

Eventually, he lost their favour and was ousted in a parliamentary no-confidence vote in 2022 after dozens of his MPs defected.

His subsequent arrest in May 2023 brought supporters onto the streets who protested against military symbols – sparking the start of a widespread crackdown against the PTI.

Thousands of supporters were arrested and around 100 – half from Mianwali – are awaiting trial before military courts, while senior party leaders were detained and forced underground before defecting in their dozens.

Crucial blow

Earlier this month, the PTI suffered a crucial blow when the Supreme Court banned it from contesting elections with its electoral symbol: the cricket bat.

In a country where millions of people cannot read or write, symbols are crucial for voters to identify their prefered party and candidate.

The election commission instead ordered Ahsan Khan to use a bottle, an emblem viewed with disdain in rural areas because it is associated with alcohol.

Bopanna, at 43, shatters the glass ceiling to win his maiden men's doubles Major partnering Ebden

The Indian veteran is now the oldest Grand Slam champion in the Open Era; the hard-fought final at Rod Laver arena against Bolelli and Vavassori features only one break of serve

AUSTRALIAN OPEN

Press Trust of India
MELBOURNE

Rohan Bopanna became only the third Indian to win a men's doubles Grand Slam title, taking the Australian Open crown with partner Matthew Ebden following a commanding win over Simone Bolelli and Andrea Vavassori, here on Saturday.

In a high-quality game of tennis, second seeded Bopanna and Ebden won 7-6(0), 7-5 against the Italian team in the final that lasted one hour and 39 minutes.

Only the iconic Leander Paes and Mahesh Bhupathi have won Major titles for India in men's tennis while trailblazer Sania Mirza did it in women's tennis.

For Bopanna it is his second Grand Slam title, having won the French Open mixed doubles trophy with Canada's Gabriela Dabrowski in 2017.

At 43, Bopanna also became the oldest Grand Slam champion in men's tennis. He bettered the record of Jean-Julien Rojer who, at age of 40, had lifted the French Open men's doubles trophy in 2022 with Marcelo Arevola.

Historic: Bopanna, who was ready to call it a day a couple of years back, credited his 'fantastic Aussie partner' Ebden for the triumph. AFP

Third time's the charm

Bopanna was playing his third men's doubles final at Grand Slam events, having ended runner-up at US Open twice (2013, 2023).

"A couple of years ago I said in a video message, I am going to call it a day because I was not winning matches. I went five months without winning a match. I thought that was the end of my journey but my perseverance, and (something) inside me kept me going," Bopanna said after his triumph.

"It really changed so many things, I got a wonderful partner to get me to all the laurels," he added.

Bopanna is already assured of becoming the new number one on Monday when the ATP rankings will be updated. At 43, he will be the oldest player to be perched on top of the ranking pile.

Bopanna acknowledged the contribution of his Australian partner Ebden and his American coach Scott Davidoff in his success story.

"It was not possible, if I had not this fantastic Aussie partner by my side, so thanks to Matty. We had a fantastic season last year and for me to win my first men's Grand Slam men's doubles Grand Slam here at the Asia-Pacific is special.

"Tennis is such a great teacher and Scott has been a great teacher who has been with me for over a decade. It was a tough, tough journey, this victory is as much yours as much it is mine," Bopanna said.

Lucky mascots

On a lighter note, he said, "I have my in-laws here. The last time they came I won my first mixed doubles. I don't know why they do not come more often." Ebden, who had won men's doubles, too, praised the Indian.

"Age truly really is not even a number for this guy. He is a champion, he is a warrior, I am forever grateful to you and your amazing team, thank you mate!," said Ebden.

It was such hard-fought battle at the Rod Laver arena that the contest featured only one break of serve when Vavassori dropped his serve at love in game 11 of the second set. There were not many break points on offer either.

The second seeds had breakpoints in successive games in the beginning of the contest. However, the Italians saved both to stay on even terms.

In game two, off Bolelli's serve, Vavassori hit a volley at 30-30 but Bopanna hit a return long.

In game four, the Italians were again down a break point when at 30-30, a return from Bopanna jumped off the net chord to give the second seeds a free point. However, Vavassori served well to save that point as well.

Serving 4-5, and 30-all, Bolelli was under pressure again but pulled off a powerful cross court forehand which was away from Bopanna's reach and then served huge to make it 5-all.

Ebden's serve came under pressure in game 11 in which he faced a breakpoint, but, after playing deuce points, the Australian closed the game with an ace.

In the tie-breaker, Bolelli's serve was broken twice as the second seeds zoomed to a 5-0 lead without losing a point on their serve.

Vavassori too lost his serve to hand their rivals six set points. They converted the first, Ebden finding a forehand winner down the line.

The second set too was tight and there was no break of serve until Vavassori lost his serve at love under pressure. Ebden came serving for the championship and they closed the match with Bopanna executing a fierce overhead smash on a return from his rivals.

Saluting a legend

Congratulations @rohanbopanna for winning your maiden #AusOpen Doubles title! An incredible effort of not giving up and pushing your limits on the court every time. Wouldn't have been possible without your partner Matthew Ebden and the team behind.
NEERAJ CHOPRA

Your moment can arrive anytime, anywhere. Just ask @rohanbopanna, who at 43, seized it on the grand stage of the @AustralianOpen. Keep training, keep dreaming and be prepared to step up when your time comes
SACHIN TENDULKAR

What a story. What an inspiration @rohanbopanna. Congratulations on becoming the #AusOpen Doubles Champion
VIRENDER SEHWAG

Outstanding! It's never too late to chase your dreams. Congratulations on making history, @rohanbopanna!
BILLIE JEAN KING

Congratulations dear @rohanbopanna on this fantastic achievement! You have proven that age is just a number and that nothing is impossible if you put your heart and soul into it. Proud moment for all of us indeed.
P.T. USHA

THE RESULTS

Finals: Women: 2-Sabalenka (Blr) bt 12-Zheng (Chn) 6-3, 6-2.
Men: Doubles: Bopanna (Ind) & Ebden (Aus) bt Bolelli & Vavassori (Ita) 7-6(0), 7-5.

Time has treated Bopanna with a tenderness that defies reason and logic

N. Sudarshan

In recent times, Indian tennis hasn't had many success stories. But in the past week, it has had two crowning glories, both courtesy Rohan Bopanna.

On Wednesday, with his quarterfinal victory at the Australian Open, the 43-year-old guaranteed himself of the No. 1 spot in world doubles rankings, the oldest man to occupy the coveted position. On Saturday, he won his maiden men's doubles Major to become the oldest to do so.

Sporting excellence in the fifth decade of one's life is not commonplace. It's a period when age, along with physical frailties, makes the end of the career feel nigh, forces athletes to reflect and be nostalgic about the good old past, and think about passing on the lessons thus learnt to future generations.

Time, however, has treated Bopanna with a tenderness that defies reason and logic. He has finished semifinalist or better in men's doubles in four of the last seven Slams he has entered. In 2023, he competed at all four Majors, all nine ATP Masters 1000s, a bunch of ATP 500s and 250s, and in Davis Cup for India.

Last man standing: By reaching the pinnacle when the game is more athletic and more powerful than ever before, Bopanna has carved a niche for himself and made a lasting impact. AFP

Bopanna may have secured just two titles last season, but he made eight finals in all, and qualified for the season-ending ATP Finals, an ode to his consistency. Modern science and better nutrition do help, but to maintain an unreal level of motivation, have the zeal to train daily, recover and travel the world, while all along not losing perspective about things he can and cannot do speaks volumes about his mental strength.

Between Bopanna's first and second Slam doubles final, there was a 13-year gap (2010 US Open to 2023 US Open). Between his two previous career-high rankings, there was a decade's gap (No.3 in 2013 to No.3 in 2023). His only earlier success at Majors came when he won the 2017 French Open mixed doubles with Gabriela Dabrowski.

But the burly man from Coorg has persevered, despite being lost at times in that frightful space between hope and despair. He doesn't possess explosive athleticism, has shed cartilage in his knees and cannot hit the gym. So he has turned to yoga for fitness and swimming for endurance.

If ever there was any doubt that this adjustment would leave him at a disadvantage, the Australian Open final banished it, as he showcased a full array of powerful serves, dynamic lunges and razor-sharp reflexes, qualities that gather rust with every passing day.

In India, a doubles practitioner is always judged against impossibly high standards. Where in singles in the last three decades, just two players have won back-to-back main draw matches at Slams (Leander Paes and Sania Mirza), in doubles there have been three World No. 1s – Paes, Mahesh Bhupathi and Sania – who have collectively lifted 15 doubles and 21 mixed doubles Majors.

Bopanna has one in each category. Yet, by reaching the pinnacle when the game is more athletic and more powerful than ever before, and the format fickle – with entire sets being replaced by tie-breakers on the ATP Tour – Bopanna has carved a niche for himself and made a lasting impact.

Sabalenka crushes Zheng, becomes first woman in 11 years to defend crown

Agence France-Presse
MELBOURNE

Aryna Sabalenka said the Australian Open will always be her "special place" after blowing China's Zheng Qinwen off court on Saturday to become the first woman to defend her title in more than a decade.

The Belarusian World No. 2 proved too strong for the 12th seed, administering a 6-3, 6-2 drubbing in 76 minutes to claim her second Grand Slam crown on Rod Laver Arena.

It capped an incredible display of power and poise from Sabalenka over the past fortnight, with the 25-year-old surging to the title without losing a set through her seven matches.

The last time the tournament witnessed a successful women's title defence was in 2013, when fellow Belarusian Victoria Azarenka achieved the feat.

"Like every player, you want to win them all (Slams), but Australia will definitely always be my special place and it's going to be in my memory for the rest of my life," she said.

"I think the first (title) is always special because it is so emotional when you win for the first time, second time it's just such a relief.

Under pressure

"I've been under a little pressure these two weeks and I'm super happy I was able to handle it and compete at such a high level."

With her latest exploits, Sabalenka cemented her reputation as one of the game's most consistent contenders at Grand Slams, reaching at least the semi-finals in her past six majors, making three finals and winning twice.

She had words of encouragement for Zheng, who was in her first Major final.

"I know this feeling – it is tough to lose in a final but you are such an incredible player, such a young girl. You are going to be in many more finals and you are going to get it," she said.

Power and poise: Sabalenka surged to the title without losing a set through her seven matches. AFP

In vivid red, she overwhelmed Zheng with her crushing groundstrokes deep into both corners and a consistently reliable serve. Zheng had reached her first Grand Slam final without meeting a seed after a host of players crashed out early on her side of the draw, and the gulf in class was exposed.

"It's my first final and I'm feeling a little bit of pity," said Zheng. "I feel very complicated because I feel like I could've done it better.

Bittersweet for Zheng

"But I really enjoyed playing in this Australian Open, it's an amazing memory for me. I'm sure there is going to be more and better in the future."

The Belarusian opened with a comfortable serve then got a look at two break points at 15-40 in Zheng's opening service game when the Chinese star sprayed a backhand wide.

She seized the chance, attacking her opponent's second serve for the break.

Sabalenka consolidated for 3-0, but only after saving three break points as Zheng's nerves settled and she worked to get into the contest.

The Chinese player finally got on the board as her serve hit its mark in game four, with two big aces and a forehand winner giving her confidence.

But she had few answers to the booming Sabalenka serve, struggling to get the ball back and get into any rallies.

Zheng saved three set points with a pair of aces and a winner to hold for 3-5, but it was delaying the inevitable as Sabalenka closed out the set on serve in 33 minutes.

Three double faults, including on break point, immediately put Zheng on the back foot in the second set as the pressure took its toll.

And there was no way back as she conceded another break to slump 4-1 behind when Sabalenka executed a perfect drop shot.

Fighting until the end, she saved four championship points before the second seed closed out the match to bank her 14th career title.

A BG-BGE

Pope's unbeaten hundred gives England hope on dramatic day

His unbeaten 148 helps Stokes' men end the third day 126 ahead with four wickets in hand; he shares a crucial century stand with Foakes after Bumrah and the spin twins have the visitors reeling at 163 for five in the second innings

ENGLAND IN INDIA

P. K. Ajith Kumar
HYDERABAD

Those who bravely planned to watch the fourth day of the first Test should say: Thank you, Mr. Pope.

So should Ollie Pope's teammates. It had looked like India could wrap up yet another home Test inside three days: half the England side was back in the pavilion while it still trailed by 27 runs. But a brilliant innings from Pope has allowed England, and their fans who have flown down in large numbers, to hope.

Significantly, Pope would return to the middle on Sunday with the intention to hurt the Indian bowlers more. He was unbeaten on 148 (208b, 17x4) at stumps on the third day at the Rajiv Gandhi International Stadium on Saturday.

Grace and gumption: Pope led England's fightback and kept his side in the hunt with a classy knock. K. V. S. GIRI

England, after conceding a lead of 190, is ahead only by 126, but if the lower-order could give Pope the kind of support he received from Ben Foakes (34, 81b, 2x4), that lead could go worryingly up for India on a tiring pitch, notwithstanding the less-than-threatening look sported by the visiting spin attack.

Near flawless innings

This was the fifth Test century for Pope. The England No. 3 could score more, but he will remember this forever.

Not many better hundreds have been made by an overseas batter in these conditions in recent times. It was nearly a flawless innings: he was on 110 when he gave his first chance.

After England lost four wickets while adding 50 runs, Pope's partnership with Foakes was going to be crucial. The wicketkeeper played his part in the 112-run partnership for the sixth wicket. When he was not watching, in admiration obviously, Pope sweeping or reverse-sweeping with confidence and profit, the wicketkeeper handled the Indian spinners well.

Zak Crawley (31, 33b, 4x4, 1x6) and Ben Duckett (47, 52b, 7x4) had given England the customary Bazball start, adding 45 in 9.2 overs.

Bumrah's burst

Then, R. Ashwin and Jadeja, and a superb spell of reverse swing from Jasprit Bumrah had England in all sorts of trouble before Pope's rescue act.

Earlier, in front of another big crowd, India resumed at 421 for seven. After Yashasvi Jaiswal and K.L. Rahul missed out on hundreds on Friday, it was Jadeja's turn.

He was batting cautiously after starting the day on 81. England opened with the express pace of Mark Wood and the clever, albeit part-time, off-spin of Joe Root. And they succeeded in keeping Jadeja and Axar Patel quiet.

Jadeja's 290-minute long vigil, however, was ended by Root, who had him lbw. The batter immediately went for the DRS, but, after two successful reviews, this time he had to walk back to the dressing room. Root stuck with his very next ball, which turned enough to sneak through the Bumrah's gate.

Mohammed Siraj denied him a hat-trick alright, but the Indian innings ended in the following over, as Rehan Ahmed cleaned up Axar.

Root was undoubtedly the pick of the four England spinners. He must be relishing the prospect of bowling in the last innings, thanks of course to Mr. Pope.

SCOREBOARD

ENGLAND – 1ST INNINGS
246 in 64.3 overs

INDIA – 1ST INNINGS
Yashasvi Jaiswal c & b Root 80 *(74b, 10x4, 3x6)*, Rohit Sharma c Stokes b Leach 24 *(27b, 3x4)*, Shubman Gill c Duckett b Hartley 23 *(66b, 2x4)*, K.L. Rahul c Rehan b Hartley 86 *(123b, 8x4, 2x6)*, Shreyas Iyer c Hartley b Rehan 35 *(63b, 3x4, 1x6)*, Ravindra Jadeja lbw b Root 87 *(180b, 7x4, 2x6)*, K.S. Bharat lbw b Root 41 *(81b, 3x4)*, R. Ashwin run out 1 *(11b)*, Axar Patel b Rehan 44 *(100b, 7x4, 1x6)*, Jasprit Bumrah b Root 0 *(1b)*, Mohammed Siraj (not out) 0 (2b); Extras (b-5, lb-6, w-2, nb-2): 15; Total (in 121 overs): 436.

FALL OF WICKETS
1-80 (Rohit, 12.2 overs), 2-123 (Jaiswal, 23.4), 3-159 (Gill, 34.5), 4-223 (Shreyas, 52.3), 5-288 (Rahul, 64.5), 6-356 (Bharat, 88.2), 7-358 (Ashwin, 90.3). 8-436 (Jadeja, 119.3), 9-436 (Bumrah, 119.4).

ENGLAND BOWLING
Wood 17-1-47-0, Hartley 25-0-131-2, Leach 26-6-63-1, Rehan 24-4-105-2, Root 29-5-79-4.

ENGLAND — 2ND INNINGS
Zak Crawley c Rohit b Ashwin 31 *(33b, 4x4, 1x6)*, Ben Duckett b Bumrah 47 *(52b, 7x4)*, Ollie Pope (batting) 148 *(208b, 17x4)*, Joe Root lbw b Bumrah 2 *(6b)*, Jonny Bairstow b Jadeja 10 *(24b, 1x4)*, Ben Stokes b Ashwin 6 *(33b)*, Ben Foakes b Axar 34 *(81b, 2x4)*, Rehan Ahmed (batting) 16 *(31b, 2x4)*; Extras (b-10, lb-6, nb-6): 22; Total (for six wkts. in 77 overs): 316.

FALL OF WICKETS
1-45 (Crawley, 9.2), 2-113 (Duckett, 18.5), 3-117 (Root, 20.6), 4-140 (Bairstow, 27.4), 5-163 (Stokes, 36.5), 6-275 (Foakes, 66.6).

INDIA BOWLING
Bumrah 12-3-29-2, Ashwin 21-3-93-2, Axar 15-2-69-1, Jadeja 26-1-101-1, Siraj 3-0-8-0.

'The wicket isn't as challenging as the ones we have played'

P. K. Ajith Kumar
HYDERABAD

Swinging away: Mhambrey lauded Pope's counter-attacking century. K.V.S. GIRI

Paras Mhambrey believes credit must be given to Ollie Pope, who made an exceptional hundred to keep England in the first Test after an engrossing third day at the Rajiv Gandhi International Stadium on Saturday.

"He played the sweep and the reverse sweep very well," said India's bowling coach. "And he played consistently, so the credit must go to him. He played really well to counter-attack at the stage it was needed. Sometimes when someone plays shots like these constantly, the bowlers get under pressure, in terms of the variations of the line."

The pitch still has something for the bowlers. "If you look at the session, you could see turn from certain areas," Mhambrey said. "The pace of the wicket has become slower and it was easier to negotiate the turn but there is still enough to keep the bowlers interested."

He said the turn on the wicket wasn't like the usual one found in the subcontinent. "There is no sharp turn," he said. "The wicket isn't as challenging as the ones we have played (of late at home). We have to get England out early on the fourth day, as soon as possible."

He said the Indian team was not surprised with the way England batted. "After watching them over the last couple of seasons, we were expecting them to bat like this and it did not surprise us," he said. "We expected their aggression and the shots they played. Some of the shots that Pope played were brave."

Mhambrey said India wasn't thinking of any particular chase-able target. "We are not putting ourselves under pressure with any target," he said. "We have to hit in the right area and extract as much turn and bounce from the wicket, (in order to limit England's lead)."

Pope's knock a masterclass on how to bat in India: Root

V. V. Subrahmanyam
HYDERABAD

The broom is out: Duckett's reverse sweeps put India's spinners off their lengths. K.V. S. GIRI

"It is one of the best knocks I have seen in world cricket and I am so pleased for him. I am speechless. He also showed great mental strength," England star batter Joe Root said on Saturday.

Speaking to the media at the end of the third day's play in the first Test against India, Root said Pope's century was a masterclass in how to bat in these conditions by an overseas batter. "And by someone who is not exposed to these conditions day in and day out," he added.

Crucial efforts by Duckett, Crawley

"The opening stand with the bat was brilliant. It could have been tricky, but they [Crawley and Duckett] have been so crucial for us over the past couple of years," Root said.

"There were partnerships after that too, when we had to get through that tricky phase when it was reversing - some of us didn't quite manage that," he said.

"But the way Ollie played was an absolute masterclass on how to bat in this part of the world. It was truly phenomenal," Root said.

"It was a brilliant day of cricket for us. The way we played and went about it from the very beginning, we were very clinical with the ball and didn't let them capitalise on what they did yesterday," said Root.

Anirudh Chandrasekar and Vijay Sundar in Challenger doubles final

Sports Bureau

Second seeds Anirudh Chandrasekar and Vijay Sundar Prashanth got past compatriots Arjun Kadhe and Jeevan Nedunchezhiyan in the doubles semifinals of the €148,625 Challenger tennis tournament in Quimper, France, on Saturday.

Anirudh and Vijay led 5-2 when Arjun and Jeevan retired.

The results: Doubles:
Semifinals: Anirudh Chandrasekar & Vijay Sundar Prashanth bt Arjun Kadhe & Jeevan Nedunchezhiyan 5-2 (retired).
Quarterfinals: Arjun & Jeevan bt Ugo Blanchet & Matteo Martineau (Fra) 3-6, 7-6(6), [10-8].

Sreeja causes a flutter before bowing out in last eight

WTT CONTENDER GOA

Jonathan Selvaraj
MAPUSA

Sreeja Akula's campaign at the WTT Contender Goa ended on Saturday but not before the 25-year-old became the first-ever Indian singles player to reach the quarterfinals of the tournament.

Sreeja, the 2022 National champion, who had already beaten World No. 30 Hana Ghoda of Egypt on Friday, continued her run in the first session of the day, beating World No. 36 Doo Hoi Kem of Hong Kong 12-10, 8-11, 11-8, 11-8.

Sreeja was playing Kem for the first time after the Asian championships in 2021 where she had lost in straight games. However, she showed no signs of nerves against the Olympic bronze medal winner from Hong Kong.

"I could execute whatever I planned. In the third game, I felt the match could turn towards her. But I tried to simply put balls on the table and chose the right ones to attack. I've always wanted to beat the top players from Asia and I was happy I could do it," Sreeja said.

Sreeja's impressive run, however, ended in the quarterfinal against another Tokyo Olympics bronze medallist (mixed doubles category) with a 5-11, 11-7, 11-6, 11-4 loss to World No. 18 Cheng I-ching of Chinese Taipei.

Against an aggressive opponent who reached the final of this tournament last year, Akula was always going to be at a disadvantage but she showed tactical nous by displaying the twiddling technique – switching the bat on her backhand from the defensive long piped rubber side to the spinny soft rubber.

While it would not be enough on the day to pull off the victory, Sreeja said she was heartened by her performance not just in Goa but also in the WTT Feeder in Corpus Christi, Texas, where she had won her first WTT title.

Sweet revenge: Sreeja had lost to Kem in the Asian championships in 2021, but swung things in her favour this time around. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

"It's a bit bittersweet to lose in the quarterfinals but I think I have a lot to be positive about. Compared to 2022, I think my forehand attack has improved a lot. My fitness has also improved because I was able to play well in two tournaments back to back. I am also happy I was bold enough to try out my twiddling technique. I want to use this technique more going forward," she said.

There are more tangible gains for Sreeja too. Ranked a career-high 66 in the world rankings prior to the competition in Goa, she is expected to break into the top-60 when the 105 points she gains as a result of making the last eight here are added to her tally this week. "I think I could even enter the top-55 with my points here. It will be important to maintain my performance now," said Sreeja.

The results: Men:
Quarterfinals: Hugo Calderano (Bra) bt Anton Kallberg (Swe) 11-7, 8-11, 11-8, 11-4; Dmitrij Ovtcharov (Ger) bt Dang Qiu (Ger) 6-11, 3-11, 11-6, 11-8, 11-4; Felix Lebrun (Fra) bt Aruna Quadri (Ngr) 11-4, 11-6, 12-10; Patrick Franziska (Ger) bt Junsung Oh (Kor) 11-9, 11-9, 10-12, 3-11, 11-9.
Doubles (final): Jonghoon Lim & Jaehyun An (Kor) bt Dang Qiu & Patrick Franziska (Ger) 11-9, 11-9, 11-7.
Women: Quarterfinals: Shin Yubin (Kor) bt Jeon Jihee (Kor) 14-12, 11-8, 11-5; Nina Mittelham (Ger) bt Cheonhui Joo (Kor) 12-10, 11-9, 12-10; Cheng I-ching (Tpe) bt Sreeja Akula 5-11, 11-7, 11-6, 11-4; Xiaoxin Yang (Mon) bt Nayeong Kim 11-7, 12-10, 13-15, 11-9; **Pre-quarterfinals:** Sreeja bt Doo Hoi Kem (HKG) 12-10, 8-11, 11-8, 11-8; Xiaoxin Yang (Mon) bt Manika Batra 11-9, 11-13, 7-11, 9-11; Jihee Jeong (Kor) bt Archana Kamath 13-11, 9-11, 11-6, 11-4.
Doubles (final): Jeon Jihee & Shin Yubin (Kor) bt Hyojoo Choi & Cheonhui Joo (Kor) 11-4, 11-4, 15-17, 11-6.

Kane scores in Bayern's win over Augsburg

Associated Press
AUGSBURG

Harry Kane scored his 23rd Bundesliga goal for Bayern Munich in a 3-2 win over local rival Augsburg on Saturday when Kingsley Coman went off hurt.

The results:
LaLiga: Las Palmas 1 (Munoz 53) lost to Real Madrid 2 (Vinicius 65, Tchouameni 84).
Serie A: Atalanta 2 (Miranchuk 33, Scamacca 45+1) bt Udinese 0.
Bundesliga: Stuttgart 5 (Millot 25-pen, Undav 30, 56, 75, Leweling 48) lost to RB Leipzig 2 (Sesko 32, Openda 55); Augsburg 2 (Demirovic 52, 90+4-pen) lost to Bayern Munich 3 (Pavlovic 23, Davies 45, Kane 58); Werder Bremen 3 (Ducksch 9, Njinmah 53, Malatini 90) bt Freiburg 1 (Grifo 28-pen); Wolfsburg 1 (Paredes 40) drew with Cologne 1 (Alidou 38).
Friday: LaLiga: Almeria 0 lost to Alaves 3 (Omorodion 10, 88, Rioja 52-pen).
Serie A: Cagliari 1 (Viola 77) lost to Torino 2 (Zapata 23, Ricci 45+3).

Indian team sets off for the Davis Cup tie against Pakistan

Spearheaded by Ramkumar, the side exudes confidence on the eve of its departure; the tie will feature four singles and a doubles

All set: The Indian Davis Cup team with AITA president Anil Jain.. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Kamesh Srinivasan
NEW DELHI

The Indian team, spearheaded by Ramkumar Ramanathan, exuded confidence on the eve of its departure for the Davis Cup World Group-1 play-off tie to be staged on the grass courts of Islamabad on February 3 and 4.

On the nicely groomed grass courts of the Delhi Gymkhana Club, the entire Indian team had a week-long training stint, supervised by coach Zeeshan Ali.

The president of the All India Tennis Association (AITA), Anil Jain, visited the training session on Saturday and wished the team a memorable tie.

India may be missing its leading players Sumit Nagal and Mukund Sasikumar, but should be well equipped, especially on grass, to meet any challenge posed by Pakistan.

There was visa concern for one member of the team, S.D. Prajwal Dev, and efforts were on to get him the clearance. Niki Poonacha, Sriram Balaji, Yuki Bhambri and Saketh Myneni, apart from Prajwal Dev and Ramkumar, had a fruitful time, sharpening their game on grass.

Former national champion and coach Ashutosh Singh was also brought for the training sessions to tune the team in the best possible way.

The Dunlop Fort balls that would be used for the tie were procured to help the players get into their rhythm.

Pakistan may rely on the seasoned Aisam-Ul-Haq Qureshi and Aqeel Khan. The 43-year-old Qureshi is ranked 127 in doubles. The 43-year-old Aqeel does not have a rank in singles or doubles. Both have formidable record, especially in Davis Cup. Pakistan's main singles player is expected to be the 23-year-old Muzammil Murtaza, ranked 1679. Muhamad Shoaib and Barkat Ullah are the other members of the Pakistan team and both do not have any international rank. The team will have Muhammad Abid as the captain.

The Indian captain Rohit Rajpal will have many options for both singles and doubles, even though the team may look to be made of doubles specialists as they all compete at the highest level in Grand Slams and ATP Tour events.

The tie, spread over two days, will feature four singles and a doubles. India will be competing in Davis Cup without the current World No.1 doubles star Rohan Bopanna, who retired from Davis Cup duty in the last tie against Morocco in Lucknow.

Gukesh lets Firouzja off the hook, slips to second spot

CHESS

Sports Bureau

As widely anticipated, Nodirbek Abdusattorov moved half-a-point ahead of fellow overnight joint leader D. Gukesh following an expected victory over Woman World champion Ju Wenjun while the Indian split the point with higher-rated Alireza Firouzja in the 11th round of the Tata Steel Masters chess tournament at Wijk aan Zee on Friday.

With two rounds to go, Abdusattorov (7.5) is followed by Gukesh (7), R. Praggnanandhaa, Vidit Gujrathi, Anish Giri and Wei Yi (6 each).

Gukesh could have kept pace with Abdusattorov had he not let Firouzja off the hook.

As per the computer evaluation, after Firouzja's 25th and 30th moves, Gukesh overlooked the best continuation and eventually settled for a draw in 38 moves.

Vidit played a brilliant game with black to defeat Iran's Parham Maghsoodloo in 37 moves. Praggnanandhaa was kept at bay for 60 moves by Alexander Donchenko.

The results (11th round, involving Indians): Masters: D. Gukesh (7) drew with Alireza Firouzja (Fra, 6); Parham Maghsoodloo (Iri, 4) lost to Vidit Gujrathi (6.5); R. Praggnanandhaa (6.5) drew with Alexander Donchenko (Ger, 4). **Challengers:** Leon Mendonca (7.5) bt Mustafa Yilmaz (Tur, 4); Erwin L'Ami (Ned, 7) bt Divya Deshmukh (4); D.Harika (4) lost to Saleh Salem (UAE, 6.5).

Deep Grace decides to call it a day

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

Indian women's hockey team defender and penalty corner specialist Deep Grace Ekka on Saturday announced her international retirement, ending an illustrious career during which she represented India in two Olympic Games.

"It is with immense gratitude and humility that I officially announce my retirement from International Hockey today. The journey from 2011

Deep Grace. FILE PHOTO

to 2023 has been the highlight of my life, and I am deeply honoured to have represented India at the pinnacle of the sport," Ekka said in a social media post.

The 29-year-old was instrumental in India qualifying for the 2016 Rio Olympics. She was a vital cog in the team's defence line at the Tokyo Games where India finished fourth.

Ekka was also a member of the Indian team that won bronze in the 2022 Birmingham Commonwealth Games. She also represented the Indian teams that won medals in the 2014 and 2018 Asian Games. She was also a member of the title-winning Indian teams in the 2016 Asian Champions Trophy and 2017 Asia Cup.

Ekka began her journey in international hockey as a 17-year-old in 2011 when she made her debut in the four-nation tournament in Argentina.

Congratulating Ekka on a glorious career, Hockey India President Dilip Tirkey said: "For over a decade, Deep Grace Ekka has been a household name in women's hockey."

Odisha and Haryana clinch the boys' and girls' hockey titles

Sports Bureau
CHENNAI

Odisha and Haryana bagged the boys' and girls' hockey titles in the 6th Khelo India Youth Games here on Saturday. Odisha blanked Madhya Pradesh 4-0 in boys' final, while Haryana edged out Madhya Pradesh by a solitary goal for the girls' crown.

Odisha was the better team throughout. It outshone MP in speed and coordination. Pratap Toppo scored a brace. Karan Lakra and Rohit Kullu scored one each.

With eight minutes remaining for the hooter, Ishika scored the winner for Haryana off a penalty corner. Her timely push in a melee fetched her team the crown.

Triumphant: The Haryana girls' team that won the hockey crown. M. VEDHAN

The results: Hockey: Finals: Boys: Odisha 4 (Pratap Toppo 2, Karan Lakra, Rohit Kullu) bt MP 0; **Girls:** Haryana 1 (Ishika) bt MP 0. **Volleyball: Semifinals: Boys:** Haryana bt UP 25-22, 25-17, 25-18; TN bt AP 18-25, 25-22, 23-25, 25-23, 15-11; **Girls:** WB bt Guj 25-11, 30-28, 25-19; Rajasthan bt TN 13-25, 25-20, 25-20. **Swimming: Boys: 50m freestyle:** 1. Jananjoy Jyoti Hazarika (Asm) 25.53; 2. Salil Prashant Bhagwat (Mah); 3. Heer Sunil Pitroda (Guj); **100m breaststroke:** 1. Rana Pratap (Jha) 1:04.91; 2. Vidith S. Shankar (Kar); 3. Bhhagya Gahlaut (Del); **200m freestyle:** 1. Yug Chelani (Raj) 1:54.41; 2. Tirthank Pegu (Asm); 3. Gotteti Sampath Kumar Yadav (AP). **Girls: 200m freestyle:** 1. Vriti Agarwal (TS) 2:11.32; 2. Aditi Satish Hegde (Mah); 3. Sri Charanu Tumu (Kar); **800m freestyle:** 1. Vritti Agarwal (TS) 9:22.74; 2. Aditi N. Mulay (Kar); 3. Meenakshi Menon (Kar); **100m breaststroke:** 1. Venika Vineet Parikh (Guj) 1:14.94; 2. Pahi Borah (Asm); 3. M. V. Joyshree (TN); **50m buttterfly:** 1. Rujuta Prasad Rajadnya (Mah) 29.18s; 2. Jahnabi Kashyap (Asm); 3. Subhranshini Priyadarshini (Asm). **Shooting: Boys: 10m air rifle:** 1. Asmit Chatterjee (WB) 250.9 pts; 2. Himanshu (Har)b; 3. Manvendra Singh Shekhawat (Raj); **25m rapid fire pistol:** 1. K. Tanishq Muralidhar Naidu (TS) 19pts; 2. Mukesh Nelavalli (AP); 3. Swaraj Sachin Bhondave (Mah). **Cycling: Boys: Individual time trial:** 1. Jai Durga (Chd) 00:41:09.550s; 2. Kheta Ram Chiga (Raj); 3. Akshar Tyagi (Del). **Girls: Individual road race:** 1. Alanis Lilly Cubeleo (Ker) 01:57:04.640s ; 2. Santoshi Oraon (Jha); 3. J. Srimathi (TN). **Weightlifting: Boys: 61kg:** 1. Sadananda Bariha (Odi) 242 kg; 2. Anush Lokhande (Mah); 3. Riki Gogoi (Asm); **67kg:** 1. Mahadev Vadar (Mah) 253; 2. P. Akash (TN); 3. Deepak Kumar Pradhan (Odi). **Girls: 49kg:** 1. Aarti Tatgunti (Mah) 170kg; 2. Panchami Sonowal (Asm); 3. Soumya Dalvi (Mah); **55kg:** 1. V. Susmitha (AP) 173; 2. Mina Santa (Odi); 3. V.R. Kanika Shree (TN); **73kg:** 1. N.V. Mahesh (AP) 265; 2. V.M. Vasantha Kumar (TN); 3. Aayush Rana (UP).

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A BG-BGE

INBRIEF

Pirates in thrilling tie with Paltan, stay unbeaten at home

Patna Pirates made a stunning comeback and nearly scripted a fantastic win, but fell short at the very last raid as it played out a 32-32 tie with Puneri Paltan in the Pro Kabaddi League at Patna on Saturday. Paltan skipper Aslam Inamdar (13 points), Pirates captain Sachin (9 raid points) and Mayur Kadam (five tackle points) were the star performers in the match.

WPL: De Klerk to replace Knight in RCB squad

England captain Heather Knight has pulled out of the second edition of the Women's Premier League which starts in Bengaluru on February 23. She has been replaced in the Royal Challengers Bangalore squad by South Africa's Nadine de Klerk, who had been released by the franchise after she did not play in the first season of the league. Another England player, Lauren Bell, had pulled out on Friday. Her replacement in the UP Warriorz was Sri Lankan Chamari Athapaththu. Bell said she was gutted that she had to withdraw from the tournament as she had to prepare for England's tour of New Zealand.

India-A secures innings win in second Test against Lions

A fine all-round performance powered India-A to an innings and 16-run win over England Lions in the second 'Test' in Ahmedabad on Saturday. The win also helped the hosts take an unassailable 1-0 lead in the three-match series.

The scores: England Lions 152 and 321 in 90.2 overs (Ollie Robinson 85, Tom Lawes 32; Saurabh Kumar 5/104) lost to India-A 489 in 111.1 overs. (Sarfaraz Khan 161, Devdutt Padikkal 105, Saurabh Kumar 77).

Australia has its job cut out to make a clean sweep

West Indies made early inroads through its pace and made Australia work hard for the first time in its dominant Test summer during the day-night match in Brisbane on Saturday. Australia lost Usman Khawaja (10) and Marnus Labuschagne (5) to end the third day at 60 for two, still needing 156 runs to make a clean sweep of its Test summer that saw it rout Pakistan 3-0 and beat the West Indies by 10 wickets inside three days in the first Test at Adelaide. Steve Smith was unbeaten on 33 with Cameroon Green negotiating the last half an hour, batting on nine.

The scores: West Indies 311 & 193 (Kirk McKenzie 41, Josh Hazlewood 3/23, Nathan Lyon 3/42) vs Australia 289/9 decl. & 60/2.

Indian men's hockey team beats South Africa 3-0

The Indian men's hockey team continued its unbeaten run on the tour to South Africa, registering an easy 3-0 win over the hosts here. Captain Harmanpreet Singh (2nd minute), Abhishek (13th), and Sumit (30th) scored for the winners on Friday night. India will play against the Netherlands on Sunday.

India enters the final, to meet Netherlands in title decider

India registered a thrilling 6-3 win over South Africa to advance to the final of the FIH Hockey5s Women's World Cup in Muscat. India will face the Netherlands in the final on Sunday.

The result: India 6 (Akshata 7, Mariana 11, Mumtaz 21, Rutuja 23, Jyoti 25, Ajima 26) bt South Africa 3 (de La Rey 5, Marks 8, Chamberlain 29).

Karnataka on the verge of taking the first-innings lead

Koushik rocks the Tripura top-order for figures of four for 34; the hosts hopes rest on Debnath who is batting on 57 to take the side past the visitors' total

RANJI TROPHY

Sports Bureau
AGARTALA

Karnataka ended day two of its Ranji Trophy Group-C match against Tripura on the cusp of securing the first innings lead, at the Maharaja Bir Bikram College Stadium here on Saturday. At stumps, the host was 198 for nine in pursuit of Karnataka's 241.

The visitors started the morning at 241 for eight, but were bundled out without any addition to the score. It took the seasoned Mura Singh just four balls to send back V. Vyshak (50, 64b. 7x4) and No.11 batter V. Koushik (0).

But Koushik (four for 34) returned to rock the Tripura top-order by dismissing opener Bikram Kumar Das and one-drop Sridam Paul. When Vyshak had Sudip Chatterjee caught behind by Sharath Srinivas, the home side was reduced to 26 for three.

It soon became 37 for four when Vidwath Kaverappa joined the party and took out former Karnataka batter Ganesh Satish.

Breathing fire: Karnataka pacer Koushik rattled the Tripura batters to pick up four wickets. FILE PHOTO: K. BHAGYA PRAKASH

The rebuild

However, opener Bishal Ghosh (44, 114b, 8x4) and skipper Wriddhiman Saha (28, 67b, 3x4, 1x6) started the rebuild with a 44-run association for the fifth wicket. Though Ghosh and Saha were eventually out in quick succession to leave Tripura at 96 for six, their effort was complemented well by Bikramjit Debnath and Mura Singh.

Debnath (57 batting, 131b, 7x4) and Mura Singh (39, 61b, 4x4) combined for a 76-run partnership to give Tripura an outside chance at scaling Karnataka's total. But another mini collapse, triggered by Koushik's scalp of Mura Singh, saw Tripura lose three wickets for 11 runs and shrink to 183 for nine.

Debnath is still at the crease, and it will be to his credit if he can drag Tripura past Karnataka.

The scores:

Karnataka — 1st innings: R. Samarth c Saha b Datta 1, Mayank Agarwal lbw b Debnath 51, K.V. Aneesh b Rana Datta 1, Nikin Jose b Mura Singh 4, Kishan S. Bedare c (sub) b Sarkar 62, Sharath Srinivas c Chatterjee b Sarkar 25, Hardik Raj lbw b Datta 9, V. Vyshak b Mura Singh 50, K. Shashikumar lbw b Mura Singh 19, Vidwath Kaverappa (not out) 4, V. Koushik b Mura Singh 0; Extras (b-2, lb-13): 15; Total (in 78.4 overs): 241.

Fall of wickets: 1-9, 2-11, 3-16, 4-103, 5-153, 6-164, 7-164, 8-224, 9-241.

Tripura bowling: Mura Singh 19.4-7-35-4, Datta 15-7-32-3, Sarkar 14-3-55-2, Debnath 13-3-50-1, Sultan 17-3-54-0.

Tripura — 1st innings: Bishal Ghosh lbw b Koushik 44, Bikram Kumar Das c Sharath b Koushik 4, Sridam Paul lbw b Koushik 1, Sudip Chatterjee c Sharath b Vyshak 1, Ganesh Satish c Sharath b Kaverappa 6, Wriddhiman Saha lbw b Hardik 28, Bikramjit Debnath (batting) 57, Mura Singh c Sharath b Koushik 39, Parvez Sultan c Sharath b Kaverappa 0, Rana Datta c Kishan b Vyshak 4, Abhijit Sarkar (batting) 5; Extras (lb-2, w-1, nb-6): 9; Total (for nine wkts. in 79 overs): 198.

Fall of wickets: 1-6, 2-20, 3-26, 4-37, 5-81, 6-96, 7-172, 8-174, 9-183.

Karnataka bowling: Kaverappa 21-8-38-2, Koushik 19-6-34-4, Vyshak 19-4-64-2, Hardik 12-2-43-1, Shashikumar 8-2-17-0.

RANJI SCORES, ROUND 4, DAY 2

Group A: At Ranchi: Vidarbha 204 & 166/1 in 40 overs (Dhruv Shorey 63 batting, Atharva Taide 84 batting) vs Jharkhand 150/9 in 51.2 overs (Kumar Suraj 57, Anukul Roy 51, A.A. Sarvate 4/22).
At Ahmedabad: Manipur 159 & 21/0 in 8 overs vs Rajasthan 399/6 decl. in 95.4 overs (Mahipal Lomror 117 n.o., Kunal Singh Rathore 156, Bishworjit 4/68).
At Rohtak: Haryana 195 in 63.3 overs (Rahul Tewatia 64, P.C. Dadhe 5/48) vs Maharashtra 194 in 58 overs.
At Delhi: Services 466/6 in 176 overs (S.G. Rohilla 153, Aanshul Gupta 43, Rajat Paliwal 44, L.S. Kumar 140 batting, A.P. Sharma 53 batting) vs Saurashtra.
Group B: At Mumbai: Mumbai 198 & 24/0 in 9 overs vs UP 324 in 81.5 overs (Samarth Singh 63, Nitish Rana 106, Aksh Deep Nath 41).
At Guwahati: Bengal 405 in 131.4 overs (Anustup Majumdar 125, Manoj Tiwary 100, Karan Lal 52, Suraj Sindhu Jaiswal 52, Mukhtar Hussain 4/86) vs Assam 99/8 in 34 overs (Denish Das 50).
At Raipur: Andhra 431 in 122.5 overs (Hanuma Vihari 183, Ricky Bhui 120, K.V. Sasikanth 42, Ravi Kiran 7/75) vs Chhattisgarh 118/3 in 42 overs.
At Patna: Kerala 227 in 74.3 overs (Shreyas Gopal 137, Himashu Singh 4/63) vs Bihar 270/5 in 73 overs (Piyush Kumar Singh 51, S. Gani 120 batting, Bipin Saurabh 60).
Group C: At Coimbatore: Chandigarh 111 & 1/0 in 2 overs vs Tamil Nadu 610/4 decl. in 126.1 overs (N. Jagadeesan 321, Pradosh Ranjan Paul 105, B. Indrajith 123).
At Agartala: Karnataka 241 in 78.4 overs (Mayank Agarwal 51, Kishan Bidare 62, V. Vyshak 50) vs Tripura 198/9 in 79 overs (B.B. Ghosh 44, B.B. Debnath 57 batting, V. Koushik 4/34).
At Porvorim: Goa 104 & 179 in 46.3 overs (Deepraj Gaonkar 46, Mohit Redkar 44, Prerit Dutta 5/48) vs Punjab 190 in 65 overs (Anmolpreet Singh 60) & 15/2 in 5.5 overs.
At Valsad: Railways 313 & 110/2 in 26.3 overs (Vivek Singh 53, S.A. Ahuja 49 batting) vs Gujarat 198 (S.A. Desai 52, Umang 68, Yuvraj 5/32).

Vihari's 183 took Andhra to 431 against Chhattisgarh. FILE PHOTO

Group D: At Cuttack: Odisha 138 & 157/3 in 44 overs (Sandeep Pattnaik 78 batting, Govinda Poddar 41) vs Himachal Pradesh 176 in 62.4 overs.
At Puducherry: Madhya Pradesh 238 in 96.2 overs (Yash Dubey 59, Himashu Matri 77, Gourav Yadav 5/70) & 49/2 in 23 overs vs Pondicherry 100 in 55.4 overs (Kumar Kartikeya 4/32, Saransh Jain 5/22).
At Mohali: Delhi 147 & 145/5 in 33 overs (Himmat Singh 109 batting, D. Dhapola 4/43) vs Uttarakhand 239 in 69.1 overs (Avneesh Sudha 64, Aditya Tare 83, Swapnil Singh 47, Navdeep Saini 4/57).
At Vadodara: J&K 457 in 122.1 overs (Vivrant Sharma 139, Shubham Singh 172, Shubham Khajuria 47, Sahil Lotra 40, A. Sheth 5/88) vs Baroda 177/4 in 49.3 overs (J.K. Singh 79, Kinit Patel 45).
Plate: At Rangpo: Sikkim 173 & 83/7 in 45 overs (Khrievitso 5/21) vs Nagaland 190 in 62.5 overs (R.S. Jaganathsinivas 66, Sumit Kumar 54, Palzor 5/24).
At Hyderabad: Arunachal 172 & 256 in 53.4 overs (Doria 58, Yadav 91) lost to Hyderabad 615/4 in 59.3 overs (Tanmay Agarwal 366, Rahul Singh 185). **Points: Hyderbad 7, Arunachal Pradesh 0**.
At Vallabh Vidyanagar: Mizoram 359 in 101.1 overs (Agni Chopra 105, Lalhruaizela 57, Vikash Kumar 67, Akash Kumar 4/79) vs Meghalaya 220/5 in 76 overs (R.R. Biswa 94 batting, Kisan Lyndoh 47).

HRC all set to host the HPSL Golconda Derby Stakes

Vinayak M. Zodge
HYDERABAD

The Hyderabad Race Club (HRC) is geared up to host the prestigious event of the year, the HPSL Golconda Derby Stakes at the renowned Malakpet racecourse on Sunday (Jan. 28) afternoon.

This Grade 1 race not only echoes the age-old equestrian tradition from the time of Nizams but is also adorned with the sponsorship of Horse Power Sports League (HPSL), marking its official brand launch in India.

Mr. Suresh Paladugu, chairman and managing director of HPSL, expressed his excitement about the partnership, calling it a significant milestone for equestrian sports in the country. HPSL is committed to contributing to the growth of equestrian sports in India, creating an unforgettable experience for enthusiasts and fostering a renewed appreciation for this unique bond.

Among the nine contenders vying for the premier honours in this mega event, Trainer S. Sreekant's ward Truth, who won very well in his last start here over a 2000m trip, should have a say at the finish. L. D' Silva trainee Livermore, the winner of the Golconda Oaks, looks fit according to her morning trials and may pose a threat.

For those eager to be part of the excitement, the entry fees for Sunday's races are ₹500 for Members and ₹1000 for Non-Members, inclusive of lunch and high tea.

Truth and Livermore should fight out the finish

HYDERABAD: Truth and Livermore should fight out the finish of the HPSL Golconda Derby Stakes (Gr. 1), the stellar attraction of the Sunday's (Jan. 28) races.

1 ROYAL CALCUTTA TURF CLUB CUP (Div. II) (1,100m), (Terms) Maiden, 3-y-o only (Cat. II) – 12.30 p.m.: 1. Anemoi (1) Santosh Raj 56, 2. Country's Fire (5) G. Naresh 56, 3. Gun For Gold (3) A.A. Vikrant 56, 4. Oliver's Mount (9) Mukesh Kumar 56, 5. Rare Vue (7) Md. Ismail 56, 6. Anahita (6) N.B. Kuldeep 54.5, 7. Cannon Rose (4) P. Sai Kumar 54.5, 8. High Feels (2) Kiran Naidu 54.5 and 9. Lady Jane (8) Nakhat Singh 54.5.
1. CANNON ROSE,
2. GUN FOR GOLD,
3. ANAHITA

2 ROYAL CALCUTTA TURF CLUB CUP (Div. I) (1,100m), (Terms) Maiden, 3-y-o only (Cat. II) – 1.00: 1. Aashritha Pet (3) N.B. Kuldeep 56, 2. Bellingham (1) Yash Narredu 56, 3. Diablo (7) Suraj Narredu 56, 4. Kalki (2) P. Trevor 56, 5. Only My Sultan (8) Kuldeep Singh (Sr) 56, 6. Torchbearer (6) P.S. Chouhan 56, 7. House Party (4) R.S. Jodha 54.5, 8. Imperia (9) Deepak Singh 54.5 and 9. Skyward (5) B.R. Kumar 54.5.
1. DIABLO,
2. BELLINGHAM,
3. KALKI

3 BANGALORE TURF CLUB CUP (1,400m), rated 20 to 45 (Cat. III) – 1.30: 1. D Right Time (8) Deepak Singh 60, 2. Precious Gift (9) P. Ajeeth Kumar 59, 3. Final Judgement (1) Vivek G 54.5, 4. Club Queen (3) R.S. Jodha 54, 5. Lady Racines (6) Kuldeep Singh (Sr) 52.5, 6. Alcahol Free (11) Ashad Asbar 51.5, 7. Ampere's Touch (12) Neeraj 51.5, 8. Antidote (5) Kaviraj 51.5, 9. Track Blazer (4) Kuldeep Singh (Jr) 51.5, 10. Hurricane Bay (7) S. Saqlain 51, 11. Jet Falcon (2) G. Naresh 50.5 and 12. Soorya Vahan (10) Surya Prakash 50.
1. FINAL JUDGEMENT,
2. HURRICANE BAY,
3. ANTIDOTE

4 MYSORE RACE CLUB CUP (1,200m), 5-y-o and upward, rated 20 to 45 (Cat. III) – 2.05: 1. Coming Home (6) Vivek G 60, 2. Ambitious Star (9) Md. Ekram Alam 58.5, 3. Creative Force (11) Kuldeep Singh (Sr) 57.5, 4. Golden Forza (7) Kuldeep Singh (Jr) 55.5, 5. Angel Tesoro (8) Kaviraj 55, 6. Beauty Flame (2) Ajay Kumar 55, 7. Samrat (3) Shivansh 55, 8. Deccan Ranger (12) Mohit Singh 54.5, 9. Exponent (14) R.S. Jodha 54, 10. Star Cruise (5) Surya Prakash 54, 11. Sucker Punch (10) G. Naresh 53, 12. Inderdhanush (1) B.R. Kumar 52.5, 13. Sadiya (4) Afroz Khan 52.5 and 14. Lights On (13) Nakhat Singh 50.5.
1. SMARAT,
2. BEAUTY FLAME,
3. ANGEL TESORO

5 MADRAS RACE CLUB CUP (1,600m), rated 40 to 65 (Cat. II) – 2.45: 1. Fly Tothe Stars (3) P.S. Chouhan 60, 2. Kings Best (7) B.R. Kumar 58.5, 3. Wallop And Gallop (12) P. Ajeeth Kumar 58, 4. Rising Tycoon (1) Ajay Kumar 57, 5. Role Model (11) Nakhat Singh 56, 6. Sangreal (6) P. Sai Kumar 56, 7. First Class (4) G. Naresh 55.5, 8. Sacred Bond (8) S. Saqlain 55.5, 9. Only My Way (13) Afroz Khan 55, 10. Fara (10) Imran Chisty 54.5, 11. Quality Warrior (2) Kiran Naidu 54.5, 12. Blazing Gun (9) Vivek G 54, 13. Alpine Girl (14) Kuldeep Singh (Jr) 52.5 and 14. Exclusive Spark (5) Md. Ismail 52.5.
1. ROLE MODEL,
2. SACRED BOND,
3. RISING TYCOON

6 ROYAL WESTERN INDIA TURF CLUB CUP (Div. I) (1,200m), rated 40 to 65 (Cat. II) – 3.20: 1. Amyra (9) Shivansh 60, 2. Leather Back (3) Ashad Asbar 59.5, 3. Miss Maya (11) P. Trevor 58.5, 4. Dyanoosh (5) Kuldeep Singh (Jr) 55.5, 5. Maverick (4) Kuldeep Singh (Sr) 55.5, 6. Splendour On Grass (7) Santosh Raj 55.5, 7. Adbhut (10) S. Saqlain 54.5, 8. Salisbury (2) B.R. Kumar 52.5, 9. Cabello (8) Afroz Khan 52, 10. Honourable Lady (12) P. Ajeeth Kumar 51, 11. Calista Girl (1) Neeraj 50.5 and 12. Dali's Destiny (6) Ajay Kumar 50.5.
1. AMYRA,
2. MISS MAYA,
3. ADBHUT

7 TURF AUTHORITIES OF INDIA CUP (Div. I) (1,400m), rated 60 to 85 (Cat.II) – 3.55: 1. Akido (7) Md. Ekram Alam 60, 2. Nugget (9) Kuldeep Singh (Jr) 58, 3. Royal Grace (6) Afroz Khan 54.5, 4. Faith (5) P. Trevor 54, 5. Thanks (8) Mohit Singh 53, 6. City Of Blessing (2) Ajay Kumar 52, 7. True Icon (1) B.R. Kumar 51.5, 8. Hugh Capet (4) Vivek G 51 and 9. Nightmare (3) Kaviraj 50.5.
1. FAITH,
2. NUGGET,
3. HUGH CAPET

8 HPSL GOLCONDA DERBY STAKES (Gr. 1) (2,400m) (Terms), 4-y-o only – 4.30: 1. Aldila (2) Antony Raj S 57, 2. Anab E Shahi (6) P. Trevor 57, 3. Champions Way (4) Suraj Narredu 57, 4. High Command (5) P.S. Chouhan 57, 5. Shadow Of The Moon (9) Mukesh Kumar 57, 6. The Godfather (1) Yash Narredu 57, 7. Truth (7) Imran Chisty 57, 8. Livermore (8) S. Saqlain 55.5 and 9. Original Sin (3) Vivek G 55.5.
1. TRUTH,
2. LIVERMORE,
3. CHAMPIONS WAY

9 DELHI RACE CLUB CUP (1,400m), rated up to 25 (Cat. III) – 5.15: 1. Cash Register (8) Surya Prakash 60, 2. Spectacular Cruise (2) Shivansh 60, 3. Setastar (6) Mukesh Kumar 59.5, 4. Char Ek Char (7) Kuldeep Singh (Jr) 59, 5. Federer (3) Ashad Asbar 59, 6. London Bell (10) Md. Ekram Alam 59, 7. Nkalanzinzi (4) Imran Chisty 59, 8. Crown Witness (11) Suraj Narredu 58.5, 9. Special Effort (9) Kiran Naidu 58.5, 10. My Way Or Highway (5) Mohit Singh 56.5, 11. Duck Hawk (1) Kaviraj 55 and 12. Siri (12) Md. Ismail 55.
1. CROWN WITNESS,
2. MY WAY OR HIGHWAY,
3. SPECIAL EFFORT

Day's Best: **FAITH**

Jackpot: (i) 1, 2, 3, 4 & 5. (ii) 5, 6, 7, 8 & 9.

Mini Jackpot: (i) 2, 3, 4 & 5, (ii) 6, 7, 8 & 9.

Treble: (i) 1, 2 & 3. (ii) 4, 5 & 6. (iii) 7, 8 & 9.

Tanala: All races.

Odisha faces a resurgent East Bengal

SUPER CUP

Amitabha Das Sharma
BHUBANESWAR

East Bengal FC will lean on its rich legacy and a recent surge in form to leverage its chances against defending champion and home favourite Odisha FC when the two clash for the Kalinga Super Cup, at the Kalinga Stadium here on Sunday evening.

The final is going to be a feisty affair considering the arsenal the two sides possess. Both teams seem to be on an even keel, having won all their four group matches and the semifinals while making their way to the title round.

The big prize: Saul Crespo and Carlos Delgado along with the trophy. BISWARANJAN ROUT

In every assessment, the two match each other in almost all departments. But when it comes to consistency, Odisha FC steals the march for being the more successful side. The Juggernauts have remained unbeaten in the 15 matches (across ISL, AFC Cup and Super Cup) while winning an enviable 13 of them.

East Bengal weathered a shaky start before steadying itself in the later stages of the ISL. The red and gold brigade has remained unbeaten in the last nine games while recording five wins in them.

The final also offers East Bengal a big chance to erase a prolonged title drought of 12 years when it comes to winning a national championship.

The Federation Cup title in 2012 was the last big triumph listed in the name of the Torch Bearers of Kolkata.

"Both teams present good dynamics of results in their performances. We have been performing consistently. And it is the same with Odisha, as they have a longer unbeaten streak," East Bengal coach Carles Cuadrat said while assessing the two sides.

KARNATAKA ROUND-UP

Mithila stars for Karnataka

BENGALURU: An all-round show by Mithila Vinod (34 and 3/26) helped Karnataka defeat Andhra in the BCCI under-23 women's one-day trophy at Kolkata.

The scores: Karnataka 238/6 in 50 overs (Roshini Kiran 30, G.R. Prerana 38, Niki Prasad 57, Vrinda Dinesh 40, Mithila Vinod 34) bt Andhra 188 in 43 overs (Ranga Lakshmi 40, K. Hamsa 40, Hema Roshini 25, Shree Charani 26 n.o., Mithila Vinod 3/26, Ananya Hegde 3/26).

Aditya, Sukruth shine

Aditya Jha (102) and J. Sukruth (98) starred for Karnataka against Tamil Nadu in the South Zone under-14 boys' cricket at Goa.

The scores: Karnataka 385/7 in 90 overs (Chavanth Gowda 59, Syaamantak Anirudh 34, J. Sukruth 98, Aaryansinh Chavda 40, Aditya Jha 102, Atharv Deshpande 36, Anirudh 3/42) drew with Tamil Nadu 208 in 82.5 overs (Shri Dharun 29, Ridam Kumar 33, Tarun 46, S. Swetheesh 31 n.o.).

LIVE TELECAST

India vs England: 1st Test, day 4, Sports 18-1 (SD & HD) & Jio Cinema App, 9.30 a.m.

Australia vs West Indies: 2nd Test, day 4, Star Sports 2 (SD & HD) & Hotstar, 9.30 a.m.

Ranji Trophy: Jio Cinema App, 9.30 a.m.

Australian Open: Sony Sports Ten 1, 2, 5 (SD & HD) & LIV, 9.30 a.m. & 2 p.m.

Men's U-19 CWC: India vs USA, Star Sports 1 (SD & HD) & Hotstar, 1.30 p.m.